Supreme Court, U.S.
FILED

No. 03 237 AUG 12 2003

In The

Supreme Court of the United States

ROBERT M. KURTZ,

Petitioner,

v.

ROBERT AYERS, WARDEN,

Respondent.

On Petition For Writ Of Certiorari To The Court Of Appeals For The Ninth Circuit

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI AND APPENDIX VOLUME I, PAGES A1-N4

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

A.

REGARDING GROUNDS #1 TO #3 OF THE SECOND-AMENDED FEDERAL PETITION

1. Is it a defense attorney's prerogative to reveal to the police or jury attorney-client communications (such as the location of the victim's body and his client's initial, since abandoned, explanation), or does the Sixth Amendment's guarantee of effective assistance of counsel require the attorney to first obtain a knowing and intelligent waiver from his client?

2. Where an attorney has betrayed material attorney-client secrets to the police and the jury, and thereby actually chilled attorney-client communications by demonstrating to the client that what he discloses is not treated as confidential, should the *Strickland* ineffective counsel standard of review apply or a less error-tolerant standard?

B.

REGARDING GROUNDS #5 TO #8 OF THE SECOND-AMENDED FEDERAL PETITION

3. Was the *Strickland* prejudice standard for claims of ineffective counsel properly applied where a district court denied such claims by repeatedly observing that the jury "could still have found Petitioner guilty" even if defense counsel had performed competently?

QUESTIONS PRESENTED – Continued

C.

REGARDING GROUNDS #1 TO #3 OF THE SECOND-AMENDED FEDERAL PETITION

4. Where a defense attorney has conceded that he provided ineffective assistance of counsel on three issues, and where he has declined to respond to a Court's request for an explanation of his conduct on other allegations of ineffective counsel, did a district court error in assuming trial counsel's actions and omissions were deliberate and awarding them strategic deference under *Strickland*?

5. Where the four issues described above were dispositive of Petitioner's claims and squarely presented by an application for a Certificate of Appealability under 28 U.S.C. section 2253, have the lower courts erred in denying such certification?

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PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Petitioner requests an order reversing the Ninth Circuit's denial of Petitioner's application for a Certificate of Appealability. (See *Miller-El v. Cockrell*, 537 U.S. 322, 154 L.Ed.2d 931, 123 S.Ct. 1029, U.S. *cert. den.*, 155 L.Ed.2d 194 (2003) [providing similar relief].)

OPINIONS BELOW

On May 14, 2003, the Ninth Circuit denied the Petition for Rehearing and Suggestion for Rehearing En Banc. (App. K.)

On March 18, 2003, the Ninth Circuit affirmed the judgment of the U.S. District Court denying a Certificate of Appealability ("COA") in this case. (App. A.)

On September 17, 2002, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California, filed an order denying Petitioner's Request for a COA. (App. B.)

Judgment was entered in the U.S. District Court on August 14, 2002, denying the Second-Amended Federal Petition for Habeas Corpus and adopting the Magistrate Judge's Report and Recommendation. (App. D.)

The Magistrate Judge issued her Report and Recommendation on August 8, 2001. (App. F.)

The California Supreme Court in two unpublished decisions denied habeas petitions filed by Petitioner on July 28, 1999 and on June 18, 1997. (App. G & App. H.)

In an unpublished Opinion dated August 30, 1995, the California Supreme Court denied Petitioner's direct appeal. (App. I.)

In an unpublished Opinion dated May 31, 1995, the California Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District, denied Petitioner's direct appeal. (App. J.)

GROUNDS FOR JURISDICTION

The Ninth Circuit denied the Petition for Rehearing and Suggestion for Rehearing En Banc on May 14, 2003. (App. K.) This Petition for Writ of Certiorari is filed within 90 days of that Order.

Petitioner invokes the jurisdiction of this Court under 28 U.S.C. section 1254 on the grounds that his rights under the Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments to the effective assistance of counsel were violated.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND STATUTES INVOLVED IN THIS CASE

U.S. CONSTITUTION, AMENDMENT VI:

> In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.

U.S. CONSTITUTION, AMENDMENT XIV, Sec. 1:

> All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States;

nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

28 U.S.C. SECTION 2253:

(a) In a habeas corpus proceeding or a proceeding under section 2255 before a district judge, the final order shall be subject to review, on appeal, by the court of appeals for the circuit in which the proceeding is held.

(b) There shall be no right of appeal from a final order in a proceeding to test the validity of a warrant to remove to another district or place for commitment or trial a person charged with a criminal offense against the United States, or to test the validity of such person's detention pending removal proceedings.

(c)(1) Unless a circuit justice or judge issues a certificate of appealability, an appeal may not be taken to the court of appeals from –

(A) the final order in a habeas corpus proceeding in which the detention complained of arises out of a process issued by a State court; or

(B) the final order in a proceeding under section 2255.

(2) A certificate of appealability may issue under paragraph (1) only if the applicant has made a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right.

(3) The certificate of appealabilty under paragraph (1) shall indicate which specific issue or issues satisfy the showing required by paragraph (2).

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

1. Pertinent Details Of The Crime.

A description of the facts presented to the jury can be found in the Magistrate Judge's *Report and Recommendation*. (App. F.)

Briefly stated, the State's theory was that Petitioner had killed his wife, Susan, after she read Petitioner's "Fourth-Step" Alcohol Anonymous ("AA") Journal. In that journal Petitioner had, with all the frankness demanded of him by AA's "Twelve-Step" program, described his intravenous drug use and how he had been intimate with prostitutes while married to Susan.

The State's theory was that Petitioner, a short time after he learned that Susan had read his journal, premeditated the crime to preempt her from divorcing him, taking him to the cleaners in divorce court, estranging him from their two-year-old son, and revealing his behavior to the community. (App. J, p. 13 [California Court of Appeal's Opinion].)

The defense theory was that Susan had attacked Petitioner, enraged by his infidelity. Petitioner testified, admitting that he killed his wife, but explaining that it had occurred accidentally as he attempted to restrain her and defend himself. Susan outweighed Petitioner by 100 pounds. (RT 722, 732-733, 840-842.)

Petitioner testified that Susan attacked him while he was occupied with installing a computer for her and that the computer cables he had draped around his neck became tangled amidst the two as they struggled. He said he grabbed a cord that had looped around her neck and held onto it until she was subdued. To his shock, when he released his grip, he found that she was dead. The next

day, Petitioner was seen walking with a noticeable limp and had a deep bite mark on his hand. (RT 728-730, 801-802.)

The State argued that the circumstance of ligature strangulation, coupled with a string of lies Petitioner told after the crime, the concealment of the body, and a remark Petitioner had made some months before that he sometimes thought it would be better if his wife were dead, suggested premeditation. The prosecution ridiculed the idea that Susan, who appeared to be non-confrontational on the evidence before the jury, and was having a difficult pregnancy, would assault Petitioner. (RT 900(16-21), 943(13-14), 944(8-17) [D.A.'s summation].)

The underlying pertinent facts are that on January 2, 1993, Petitioner went to an AA meeting. Petitioner's sponsor, Reed Harris, noticed that Petitioner was agitated that evening. Petitioner revealed to Harris that Susan had found his Fourth-Step notes.

On Thursday, January 7, 1993, Petitioner reported his wife missing. Petitioner claimed his wife had left their home at 9:30 PM that evening. Her car was found at their business. Susan's coat and the keys to the store were inside. Susan's purse, some cash, and a computer printer were missing. The back door appeared to have been tampered with. Police officers filed a missing persons report.

On Monday, January 11, 1993, Petitioner went out to dinner with his mother and stepfather, Kathy and Jerry Hamilton. During dinner, Petitioner told them that Susan was dead. Petitioner claimed Susan committed suicide in the garage. Petitioner arranged to turn himself in to his attorney the following morning. Later that same evening he told his AA sponsor, Reed Harris, about Susan's suicide.

2. Petitioner's Attorney Tells The Police Where They Can Find Susan's Body.

On Tuesday morning, January 12, 1993, the police executed a search warrant at Petitioner's house. Petitioner came home during the search and was allowed to get a change of clothes and to leave. Petitioner went from his house to the office of William Smith, once the District Attorney of Fresno County, then in private practice as a defense attorney. Smith had been retained and the appointment set for this meeting on the preceding day.

Petitioner, Smith, and Jerry Hamilton (Petitioner's stepfather) sat down in Smith's office to discuss Petitioner's predicament and to prepare Petitioner for a voluntary surrender to the authorities later that morning.

Shortly after they sat down, Smith called Petitioner's house. He spoke to a detective, inquiring if anything had been found at Petitioner's house. The detective said no. Smith ended the conversation, only to call back a short time later. Again Smith asked if they had found anything inculpatory. The detective again said no. Placing his hand over the receiver, Smith asked, "should we tell them?" (App. M & App. N [Declarations of Petitioner and Jerry Hamilton].) As for what happened next, Petitioner presented to the District Court two declarations, his own and that of his stepfather, Jerry Hamilton. Hamilton heard Smith ask the question, but did not hear any response from Petitioner. (App. N.) Petitioner's declaration indicates he did not respond. (App. M.) Both declarations make clear that there was *no* advance warning or consultation on the wisdom of disclosing the body's location, just the question, and a split second later, the disclosure. Smith told the detective to look in a particular closet in the house. (*Ibid.*) At the time of the disclosure, the search team had left

Petitioner's house, but for a single man whose sole remaining intention was to erase Petitioner's computer files.

Petitioner had related this information to Smith before Smith made the calls to the house. As the police would later admit, they had overlooked the body in their search of the residence. The body was secreted in a closet, wrapped in plastic, and hidden beneath parcels. The body's odor was masked by air fresheners. (CT 126-127; RT 493-498.) In proceedings before the U.S. District Court, Respondent cited no evidence which would have supported an inference that the police would have discovered the body without guidance from Smith.

D. JURISDICTIONAL FACTS RELATED TO QUESTIONS PRESENTED #1 AND #2

The questions in this case related to the attorney-client privilege stem from Grounds #1 to #3 of the Second-Amended Federal Petition, which allege:

> *Ground #1*: Petitioner's right to effective assistance of counsel under the 6th and 14th Amendments and his right to due process under the 5th Amendment were violated by trial counsel Smith's wanton mismanagement of information covered by the attorney-client privilege.
>
> *Ground #2*: Trial counsel's unprofessional handling of client's confidences frustrated the formation of a meaningful attorney-client relationship by causing Petitioner to be less than candid with him in subsequent meetings. This violated Petitioner's 6th and 14th Amendment rights to effective assistance of counsel as crucial information related to guilt, innocence, and punishment was withheld from Smith and ultimately the jury.

> *Ground #3*: Attorney Smith's handling of Petitioner's privilege constituted malpractice and gave rise to a conflict of interest which violated Petitioner's 6th and 14th Amendment rights to effective counsel. (App. L.)

On August 8, 2001, the Magistrate Judge issued a *Report and Recommendation* suggesting the denial of Grounds #1 to #3 for these reasons. According to the Magistrate Judge:

> (1) A significant and unauthorized breach of the attorney-client privilege by a defense attorney is not "prima facie evidence of unreasonable or incompetent assistance of counsel" (App. F, p. 13(7-11).)
>
> (2) The operative question under *Strickland* was whether trial counsel's decision to betray his client's confidence was "reasonable and competent behavior" and, if not, whether there was a reasonable probability that the error affected the outcome of the case. (*Id.*, at pp. 13(12-15), 17(19-20).)
>
> (3) The disclosure of the location of Susan's body by Petitioner's attorney came before the initiation of adversarial judicial proceedings and therefore does not implicate the 6th Amendment. (*Id.*, at p. 17(6-18).)
>
> (4) Even if trial counsel did not consult with Petitioner on the subject, and obtain a knowing and intelligent waiver, he did give Petitioner the "opportunity to say no", and that was sufficient. (*Id.*, at p. 17(21-27).)

(5) The police would inevitably have discovered the body even without Smith's disclosure. (*Id.*, at pp. 17(28)-18(2).)[1]

(6) Petitioner's story of suicide would have been disclosed even if trial counsel had not asked Jerry Hamilton about the story Petitioner had told during the attorney-client conference of January 12, 1993. (*Id.*, at pp. 18(10)-20(2).)

(7) By answering the questions posed by trial counsel about attorney-client communications, Petitioner, during his testimony at trial, impliedly consented to the disclosure and effectively waived the attorney-client privilege. Under such circumstances trial counsel's failure to forewarn

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[1] In a *Memorandum of Points & Authorities* filed in support of the Second-Amended Federal Petition, at page 14, note 6, Petitioner stated:

> .... Petitioner notes that there is good reason to believe that the police would have concluded their search without discovering the body. Detective Schiotis had made a visual search of the southeast bedroom and had not seen the body. (CT 126(20)-127(18).) The police had apparently finished their search of the house at the time of the second phone call from Smith, save for their intention to have a computer expert attempt to access Petitioner's computers. (See App. N [Petitioner's declaration]; CT 126-127; RT 493-494.) Detective Schiotis had left the scene, apparently with plans to return with that expert. (App. N.) Also the body was wrapped in plastic (RT 487(22)-488(11), 489), and had a lot of boxes and items stacked upon it, making it difficult to detect. (RT 484.) A bed was obstructing the closet (RT 483) and several air fresheners were deployed about the body to mask its smell. (RT 484-486.)

Neither Respondent nor the Magistrate Judge, ever addressed or rebutted these points. The burden of the government is to prove inevitable discovery by a preponderance of the evidence. (*U.S. v. Mejia*, 69 F.3d 309, 319 (9th Cir. 1995).)

and consult with Petitioner was irrelevant. (*Id.*, at p. 20(4-18).)

(8) Counsel's decision to expose to the jury the lies Petitioner told counsel during attorney-client conferences may have been "unorthodox", but it can be justified as sound strategy, as exposing how Petitioner lied to his own attorney supported the defense theory of "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder". (*Id.*, at pp. 20-21.)

(9) Even if trial counsel failed to forewarn or consult before betraying his client's secrets, and even if counsel's behavior impaired Petitioner's trust in counsel and led Petitioner to withhold material information relevant to the case, these circumstances do not establish a 6th Amendment violation as Petitioner was not entitled to a "meaningful relationship" with his attorney or to one of "trust and candor". (*Id.*, at p. 22(14-24) [citing *Morris v. Slappy* (1983) 461 U.S. 1, 14, 75 L.Ed.2d 610, 103 S.Ct. 1610.)[2]

(10) Moreover, Petitioner's failure "to request a change or substitution to counsel before or during trial" forfeited his right to complain about how trial counsel's precipitous and unauthorized disclosure of his secrets impaired the attorney-client relationship. (*Id.*, at p. 22(25-28).)

---

[2] True, the Constitution is not violated when a defendant idiosyncratically fails to be candid with his attorney – that is so long as the attorney has been faithful to his professional end of the bargain. In such an instance, the vagaries of a client's state of mind are completely his own problem. However, where an attorney's unorthodox behavior hazard's his client's trust, that conduct "must . . . be imputed to the State". (*Coleman v. Thompson*, 501 U.S. 722, 754, 115 L.Ed.2d 640, 111 S.Ct. 2546 (1991).)

In an *Objection* filed on November 13, 2001 under 28 U.S.C. section 636(b), Petitioner contested each of the above findings. (See App. O, pp. 1-35.) Some of the specific points that Petitioner pressed were captioned in the *Objection* as follows:

> *Ground #1*: A. The Magistrate Judge incorrectly concludes that a significant and unauthorized breach of the attorney-client privilege ("ACP") by a defense attorney is not "prima facie evidence of unreasonable or incompetent assistance of counsel". (App. O, p. 2.)
>
> > 1. The statutes and ethical standards violated by trial counsel, which are contained in Grounds #1 to #3 of the federal petition. (*Id.*, at p. 3.)
> >
> > 2. Given the purpose of the privilege, a lawyer who makes significant disclosures of ACP material without the due consultation and consent from his client is presumptively incompetent. (*Id.*, at p. 6.)
>
> B. Petitioner was prejudiced by the testimony elicited by trial counsel from Jerry Hamilton regarding the privileged communications of January 12, 1993. (*Id.*, at p. 9.)
>
> > 1. Trial counsel's improper elicitation of privileged material during his cross-examination of Jerry Hamilton at the preliminary hearing. (*Id.*, at p. 10.)
> >
> > 2. Trial counsel's examination of Jerry Hamilton at trial [regarding ACP material] and the ramifications thereof. (*Id.*, at p. 10.)
> >
> > 3. Further ramifications of trial counsel's incompetence: the need to explain when, how, and why Petitioner changed his story. (*Id.*, at p. 13.)

C. Magistrate Judge irrelevantly raises the doctrine of waiver in relation to [testimony from Petitioner] explaining why he lied to his attorney and why he later decided to tell the truth. (*Id.*, at p. 18.)

D. The Magistrate Judge erroneously frames trial counsel's elicitation of ACP material from Petitioner as a tactical choice worthy of deference when counsel lacked the power to unilaterally disclose the information in the first instance. (*Id.*, at p. 19.)

Ground #2: A. It is well settled that the effectiveness of counsel at trial can be compromised by counsel's conduct before the commencement of adversarial judicial proceedings. (*Id.*, at p. 25.)

B. The Magistrate Judge improperly concludes that Petitioner waived his ACP with respect to the location of Susan's body when the facts before the Court are all to the contrary. (*Id.*, at p. 26.)

C. The Magistrate Judge's application of the 'inevitable discovery doctrine' is unfounded and contrary to the undisputed evidence in the record. (*Id.*, at p. 29.)

D. The Magistrate Judge erroneously equates Ground #2 with cases in which a defendant had competent counsel, but not a 'meaningful relationship' therewith. (*Id.*, at p. 30.)

E. Ground #2 warrants application of the per se standard of reversal attendant to structural error. (*Id.*, at p. 32.)

Ground #3: A. Trial counsel's mismanagement of ACP material created an actionable conflict of interest. (*Id.*, at p. 34.)

Despite the above objections, and the extensive supporting argument for each, on August 13, 2002, the District Court Judge adopted the Magistrate Judge's

Report and Recommendation. (App. E.) On September 9, 2002, Petitioner noticed his appeal and sought an extension of time to file a request for a Certificate of Appealability ("COA"). (App. P.) The District Court denied the request, ruling that it was "unnecessary as the notice of appeal is deemed to constitute a request for a Certificate of Appealability". (App. C.) On September 17, 2002, the District Court, apparently working from the Magistrate Judge's *Report and Recommendation* filed on August 8, 2002, decided for all ten grounds of the Second-Amended Federal Petition, that "Petitioner [had] not made the required substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right". (App. B.)

As was allowed under Circuit Rule 22-1, Petitioner then filed a motion with the Ninth Circuit in support of his request for leave to appeal. (App. Q.) Attached as Exhibit 'C' to that motion was the *Objection* Petitioner filed with the District Court. In addition the *Motion* supplemented Petitioner's showing with additional argument concerning Grounds #1 to #3, and #5 to #8, of the Second-Amended Federal Petition, i.e., the very Grounds which are implicated by the five questions presented in this Petition for Writ of Certiorari.

More specifically, the Circuit Rule 22-1 Motion filed with the Ninth Circuit alerted that Court to the debatable legal and factual issues which were the basis of the findings of the District Court on Grounds #1 to #3. (See App. Q, pp. 4-10, 20-21 [the Rule 22-1 Motion].) After that Motion was denied, Petitioner filed for rehearing. His petition for rehearing raised the legal and factual issues which are now before this Court in the form of 'Questions Presented' #1 and #2. (App. R.) Before rehearing was denied, Petitioner also filed a letter brief under F.R.A.P.,

Rule 28(j), asking the Ninth Circuit Court to take notice of its recent and contradictory decision in *McClure v. Thompson*, 323 F.3d 1233, 1242-1243 (9th Cir. 2003) [holding that a defense attorney's unauthorized disclosure of the client-confided location of a murder victim's body constitutes a Sixth Amendment violation].) (App. S.)

E. JURISDICTIONAL FACTS RELATED TO QUESTION PRESENTED #3

Question Presented #3 is concerned with the structure of the prejudice analysis performed on Petitioner's ineffective counsel claims in District Court. During the relevant passages of the *Report and Recommendation*, the Magistrate Judge repeatedly observes that the jury "could still have found Petitioner guilty" – or words to that effect – even if trial counsel had presented the extra-record evidence which is the basis of Grounds #5 to #8 of the Second-Amended Federal Petition.

In his November 13, 2001 *Objection* Petitioner argued that this was not the correct inquiry. In essence, the Magistrate Judge applied the *Jackson v. Virginia*, 443 U.S. 307, 319, 61 L.Ed.2d 560, 99 S.Ct. 2781 (1979), standard for claims of insufficient evidence to four claims that should have been analyzed under *Strickland's* "probabilistic" standard. (App. O, pp. 38-53.) This argument was also pressed in the motion that Petitioner filed with the Ninth Circuit. (App. Q, pp. 13-18.) Furthermore, Question Presented #3 was raised again in the Petition for Rehearing filed with the Ninth Circuit. (App. R, pp. 5-9.)

F. JURISDICTIONAL FACTS RELATED TO QUESTION PRESENTED #4

Question Presented #4 was raised in Petitioner's *Objection* as filed with the District Court on November 13, 2001. (App. O, pp. 53-64.) Petitioner's Rule 22-1 Motion with the Ninth Circuit gave the issue additional emphasis. (App. Q, pp. 11-12.)

G. JURISDICTIONAL FACTS RELATED TO QUESTION PRESENTED #5

As previously noted, the District Court deemed Petitioner's *Notice of Appeal* to be a request for a Certificate of Appealability on all grounds of the petition, and for all the reasons covered by Petitioner's *Objection*. (App. B.) Petitioner's Circuit Rule 22-1 Motion for a Certificate of Appealability in the Ninth Circuit emphasized the important and debatable legal and factual questions bearing on Grounds #1 to #3 and #5 to #8 of the Second-Amended Federal Petition. (App. Q.) Both that document and the subsequent Petition for Rehearing, requested a COA on those seven grounds. (App. Q & App. R.) Thus, this Court has jurisdiction to consider all five Questions Presented.

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT

Reason #1: Certiorari should be granted to close a gap in this Court's jurisprudence regarding the attorney-client privilege. In *Upjohn v. United States*, *Fischer v. United States*, *United States v. Zolin*, and *Weatherford v. Bursey*, this Court held that the Sixth Amendment and the attorney-client privilege stand to safeguard a legitimate

attorney-client relationship and its secrets from intrusion by opposing parties and the Government.[3] In *Nix v. Whiteside*, this Court made clear that neither the Sixth Amendment nor the attorney-client privilege shields a client's announced plans to engage in future criminal conduct, such as perjury.[4] However, the Court has never written to define the degree of discretion that an attorney has in disclosing his client's confidences about a *completed* crime, nor the extent to which an unauthorized disclosure by a criminal defendant's attorney may be said to violate the Sixth Amendment. Indeed, in *Nix v. Whiteside*, supra, the Court pointed out the need to address this issue "[i]n some future case". (*Id.*, at 475 U.S. 165-166.)

The lower federal courts exploited this lacuna, expressly finding that "while a violation of attorney-client privilege, if proven, may be a violation of ethical cannons, it is not prima facie evidence of unreasonable or incompetent assistance of counsel". (App. F, p. 13(9-11).) The District Court observed that it could not "find any statement of law which holds, that counsel has an affirmative duty to inform his client of the protection of [the] attorney-client privilege before seeking consent to disclose the privileged information". (*Id.*, p. 13, fn. 5.) It then concluded that Petitioner could not succeed on federal petition Grounds #1 to #3 unless he proved that counsel's betrayal

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[3] *Upjohn v. United States*, 449 U.S. 383, 389, 66 L.Ed.2d 584, 101 S.Ct. 677 (1981); *Fischer v. United States*, 425 U.S. 391, 403, 48 L.Ed.2d 39, 96 S.Ct. 1569 (1976); *United States v. Zolin*, 491 U.S. 554, 562, 105 L.Ed.2d 469, 109 S.Ct. 2619 (1989); *Weatherford v. Bursey*, 429 U.S. 545, 554, fn. 4, 51 L.Ed.2d 30, 97 S.Ct. 837 (1977).

[4] *Nix v. Whiteside*, 475 U.S. 157, 165-166, 89 L.Ed.2d 123, 106 S.Ct. 988 (1986).

of his confidences was "outside the broad scope of reasonable and competent behavior". (*Id.*, at pp. 13(11-15), 17(19-20).) Thus, under the District Court's analysis, the deployment of privileged information was within the strategic prerogative of Petitioner's attorney, just as, say, a decision to call a given witness (other than Petitioner) was.

Petitioner strove mightily to persuade the lower courts that the unauthorized disclosure of a client's legitimate confidences – especially without advance consultation – is not within the lawful and ethical purview of an attorney's strategic fiat. Based upon the relevant statutes, ethical canons, and this Court's decisions, Petitioner would appear to have the better argument.

Under California Business and Professions Code section 6068(e), trial counsel had a duty to "maintain inviolate the confidence, and at every peril to himself . . . to preserve the secrets, of his or her client". The American Bar Association's (ABA) Ethical Canon 4 provides: "A lawyer should preserve the confidences and secrets of a client." The ABA's Ethical Consideration EC4-4 provides in pertinent part: "A lawyer owes an obligation to advise the client of the attorney-client privilege and timely to assert the privilege unless it is waived by the client." ABA Model Rule of Professional Conduct (1983), Rule 1.6 provides a list of well established exceptions to the rule of confidentiality, only one of which is pertinent to this case: A lawyer may reveal confidential information if "the client consents after consultation". Consistent with the ABA rule, a respected treatise on California Criminal Practice describes the proper procedure to follow in the initial client interview:

> Perhaps the most important objective of the initial interview is to establish the proper attorney-client relationship. The attorney must strive to develop a climate of trust by explaining the attorney-client privilege, pointing out that a successful outcome requires that the attorney know all the facts, and conducting the interview in a manner that inspires confidences and trust.

(Lexis-Nexis (2003) *California Criminal Defense Practice*, § 1.13(2)(b), p. 1-44.11.)

Furthermore, black-letter law in California reinforces the ABA rules on the subject. California Evidence Code sections 953 to 955 state that the privilege is vested in the client, not his attorney. "A lawyer who . . . received . . . a communication that is subject to the lawyer-client privilege has a duty to claim the privilege whenever he . . . is present when the communication is sought to be disclosed, unless the holder of the privilege no longer exists **or instructs the lawyer otherwise**." (Jefferson's *California Evidence Benchbook* (3rd Ed., 2003) § 40.7 (emphasis added). Waiver of the privilege can only occur "if any holder of the privilege . . . has consented to [such] disclosure". (Cal Evidence Code § 912(a).) The attorney, under California law, is not defined as a "holder" of the attorney-client privilege. (Cal. Evidence Code § 953.)

According to this Court's precedent, these statutes and professional rules have compelling weight in context of the Sixth Amendment analysis for ineffective counsel claims – such as those made by Petitioner. (*Strickland v. Washington*, 466 U.S. 668, 688-689, 80 L.Ed.2d 674, 104 S.Ct. 2052 (1984); *Wiggins v. Smith*, ___ U.S. ___, ___ L.Ed.2d ___, 123 S.Ct. 2527, 2534-2539 (2003) [parts IIA and IIB(1) citing ABA standards as "guides to determining what is reasonable"].)

Thus, contrary to the Magistrate Judge's assertion, a violation of the attorney-client privilege is prima facie evidence of unreasonable and incompetent assistance of counsel. How could it be otherwise? The District Court, in essence, held that an attorney's violation of explicit state statutes, and the related ABA standards, may yet be competent, ethical, and reasonable.

Lacking a rebuke through this case, and broader guidance on principle, attorneys and courts will remain empowered to assess a defense attorney's unilateral disclosure of his client's secrets in terms of whether pragmatic justification for them can be postulated.

In deciding to grant certiorari, this Court should reflect upon the fact that this case has reached it because 16 judges[5] felt that trial counsel Smith's conduct was perfectly within the ambit of his authority and the Sixth Amendment. The federal judges who have reviewed the case do not even think that Grounds #1 to #3 are worthy of appeal. Such circumstances evidence a dire need for an admonishment and instruction from this Court. (See *Miller-El v. Cockrell*, 537 U.S. 322, 154 L.Ed.2d 931, 123 S.Ct. 1029, U.S. *cert. den.*, 155 L.Ed.2d 194 (2003).)

Reason #2: Certiorari should be granted because it is unlikely that a case more probative of the relationship between the Sixth Amendment and the attorney-client privilege will come along. As previously noted, the Ninth Circuit just decided a case in which a defense attorney

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[5] That is, one Superior Court Judge, three Judges of the California Court of Appeal, seven Judges of the California Supreme Court, the Magistrate Judge, the District Court Judge, and three Judges of the Ninth Circuit.

disclosed without authorization the client-confided location of a murder victim's body. (*McClure v. Thompson*, 323 F.3d 1233, 1235-1239 (9th Cir. 2003).) *McClure* is probably now before this Court seeking certiorari. Given the split panel decision in *McClure*, there may be good cause for certiorari to be granted. However, in that case the attorney believed that his disclosure could potentially save lives. (*Id.*, at 1236.) In the case *sub judice*, no one has tried to justify the disclosures in terms of the prevention of other criminal acts or the saving of life. Moreover, in this case, there were multiple breaches of the privilege, breaches across the entire spectrum of trial counsel's representation of Petitioner. In *McClure* there was only one.

To aid this Court in assessing the "cert-worthiness", both as an independent proposition and vis-à-vis *McClure*'s, it will be helpful for the Court to know something about the other ways that attorney Smith exposed information subject to the ACP.

Petitioner has already described the way in which Smith revealed the location of Susan Kurtz's body. Unfortunately, Smith's penchant for revealing privileged material manifested itself in other ways, both at Petitioner's preliminary hearing and at trial. Petitioner will now describe the events at trial.

When Jerry Hamilton testified, Smith broached the subject of the content of the attorney-client conference of January 12, 1993. (RT 123(22)-125(3).) In light of the apparent waiver of the privilege, the prosecutor on redirect elicited that Petitioner had told Smith where the body was and that Petitioner had lied to Smith, saying that Susan had committed suicide. (RT 133-134.) Later in the trial, Mr. Hamilton was recalled to the stand and Smith expanded the scope of the privileged facts divulged to the

jury. Under Smith's questioning, Mr. Hamilton testified that Petitioner "may have" told Smith that he found Susan hanging from the rafters in the garage and that Petitioner did tell Smith that he found Susan on the floor beneath the rafters. (RT 445.)

This testimony in no way helped Petitioner. The coroner conclusively ruled out death by hanging (RT 345, 422-423), and Petitioner's own testimony was inconsistent with the suicide/rafter's story. (RT 724-748.)

The brunt of these unprofessional errors began to be felt by Petitioner during his testimony in the defense case. Trial counsel knew that his client had abandoned the suicide/rafters story. Nonetheless, he had allowed the jury to learn that Petitioner had told him that story at the outset of the attorney-client relationship. This created a rhetorical problem. Before he could have his client tell the truth, he first had to explain how and why his client had abandoned the false suicide/rafters story. The upshot of these considerations was that, barely a minute into the direct examination, **Attorney Smith had Petitioner admit that he had lied to Smith**. (RT 684.) Later in the direct examination, Smith asked Petitioner to tell the jury **why** he had lied to Smith. (RT 778.) Trial counsel asked Petitioner to describe what caused him "to admit that [he was] responsible for her death after months of lying?" (RT 779(10-11).) Smith, of course, knew that this question would elicit privileged material, as an excerpt from the transcript will make clear:

> A. [By Petitioner]: ". . . the final straw [in admitting that I was responsible came] in that meeting that we had together, you [i.e., Smith] had indicated to me that given the facts in this case and what I had said . . . wasn't very plausible.

Q. At that meeting, did you tell me what happened?

A. No.

Q. When did – how long after that meeting did you come to me?

A. The next day."

(RT 779-780.)

Smith then led Petitioner through a series of questions establishing that Petitioner had never admitted his responsibility for Susan's death prior to the January 12, 1993 attorney-client conference. (RT 780.) The prosecutor on cross-examination made predictable and devastating use of the scope of Smith's ever-widening elicitation of attorney-client information:

Q. [By the Prosecutor] You met with your attorney and he told you that if you maintained this story of suicide, you were going to go down on first degree murder. And he told you to think about that and . . . now we have this story you've related here in court.

M. Smith: Again, Your Honor, object, misstating the testimony of the witnesses.

The Court: Sustained.

Q. Did your attorney sit down with you and tell you that your story of suicide wasn't going to wash?

A. Not in those words.

Q. In – in words to that effect?

A. Yes.

Q. And he told you to think about it?

A. No.

Q. Well, it was at some point after that discussion, was it not, that this story surfaced about this struggle in the house?

A. That's correct. (RT 786(7-25).)

Later, the prosecutor ravaged Petitioner's credibility with these questions.

Q. When did you tell Mr. Smith, you told him that she had committed suicide?

A. That's correct.

Q. And it wasn't until he sat you down and said that that wasn't going to wash that your story changed?

Mr. Smith: Your Honor, I am going to object to the form of question. I think it's misleading the evidence.

The Court: Sustained. Rephrase.

Q. When you met Mr. Smith, you didn't tell him that you had had this struggle and she accidentally was killed?

A. No.

Q. In fact, you told him about this suicide. When you talked to him about the suicide, did you say she was hanging from the rafters?

A. I don't recall.

Q. You don't recall what you told your lawyer when you first met him and told him about your wife's death?

A. No.

(RT 814(7-25).) However, the prosecutor was not finished exploiting the advantages offered by the scope of Smith's direct:

Q. Isn't it a fact that – strike that. At the preliminary hearing, back in February, you heard

> the testimony of Doctor Gopal regarding the medical evidence in this case?
>
> A. Yes, I did.
>
> Q. And you heard him say at that time that this was not a hanging, not a suicide. Do you recall that?
>
> A. Yes.
>
> Q. And isn't it true it was after that point in time that you decided to say that, yes, you were involved in her death but it was this accidental killing?
>
> A. It might have been after that, yes.

(RT 828-829.)

Predictably, during closing argument, the prosecutor leveraged the windfall of privileged information that he had been handed into a stunning attack on the bonafides of Petitioner's testimony:

> Well, come February at the preliminary hearing, [Petitioner] learns different. This isn't a suicide, it is not a hanging. The physical evidence is incompatible with his second lie so he has had six months to think about his third one and you have heard it here, Friday and yesterday. The way he has craftily lied throughout this case reminds me of the saying I generally don't quote, but there is a saying that says, 'Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when we practice to deceive'. That quote was made hundreds of years ago, I believe, but you'd think that the author had this man in mind.

(RT 902-903.)

Later in his summation the prosecutor remarked that Petitioner had lied to everyone, even "to his own attorney . . . but now he would have you believe that he's telling the

truth. He is not. He's lying to you." (RT 944.) From the above passages and facts, this Court can readily see that trial counsel exposed nearly the entire attorney-client relationship to the jury. Petitioner alleged that he did so without consultation, and no evidence to the contrary was ever adduced. (See Second Amended Federal Petition, App. L, pp. 8-10.) On such facts, Petitioner should not only have been granted a COA, he should have been granted relief.

Reason #3: Certiorari should be granted to explore whether the *Strickland* outcome-determinative standard should be applied, or a less-error tolerant one, to claims such as Petitioner's Ground #1 and #2. Petitioner presented to the District Court prima facie evidence that the breach of the privilege inhibited him from disclosing vital facts bearing on the charges against him. (See App. M [Ground #2].) Such allegations should not be hard for this Court to believe. "[I]f the client knows that damaging information could more readily be obtained from the attorney . . . [a] client would be reluctant to confide in his lawyer and it would be difficult to obtain fully informed legal advice." (*Fischer v. United States*, 425 U.S. 391, 403, 48 L.Ed.2d 39, 96 S.Ct. 1569 (1976).) The "Sixth Amendment's assistance-of-counsel guarantee can be meaningfully implemented only if a criminal defendant knows that his communications with his attorney are private. . . ." (*Weatherford v. Bursey*, 429 U.S. 545, 554, fn. 4, 51 L.Ed.2d 30, 97 S.Ct. 837 (1977).) The privilege is therefore central "to the proper functioning of our adversary system of justice." (*United States v. Zolin*, 491 U.S. 554, 562, 105 L.Ed.2d 469, 109 S.Ct. 2619 (1989).)

The District Court shrugged off these authorities, and Petitioner's qualms with respect to the standard of review being applied to his claims, holding that it was Petitioner's

responsibility, even without advice from his attorney on the scope and nature of the privilege, to realize that counsel's actions were unlawful and unethical, and Petitioner's responsibility to seek to terminate his (rather expensive) relationship with his attorney. (App. F, pp. 22(14)-23(8) [denying Ground #2].)

The District Court's reasoning stands on its head the whole principle behind the Sixth Amendment's guarantee of effective counsel. Under the District Court's analysis, the client must be sufficiently versed in the nuances of the privilege to recognize the impropriety of his attorney's behavior; and, if he is not that sophisticated, he is deemed to have forfeited his rights – both under the attorney-client privilege and the Sixth Amendment. Yet, this Court has observed: "[a] layman may not be aware of the precise scope, the nuances, and boundaries of [a testimonial privilege like the 5th Amendment]." (*Maness v. Meyer*, 419 U.S. 449, 466, 42 L.Ed.2d 574, 95 S.Ct. 584 (1975).) How much more so the attorney-client privilege? This Court may answer that question, and demonstrate the proper standard of review for claims such as Petitioner's by granting certiorari.

Reason #4: Certiorari should be granted to address the intra-circuit split created by the Ninth Circuit's holdings in *McClure v. Thompson*, 323 F.3d 1233 (9th Cir. 2003), and this case. Such a split is a recognized basis for certiorari to be granted. (Stern, Gressman, et al., *Supreme Court Practice* (7th Ed. 1993) § 4.6 at pp. 176-177.)

Ironically, *McClure*, decided within days of the denial of Petitioner's appeal by the Ninth Circuit, vindicates Petitioner's position and contradicts the District Court on three core issues:

First, *McClure* holds that a material breach of the attorney-client privilege "makes out a deprivation of the Sixth Amendment right to counsel". (*Id.*, at 1242-1243.) As noted, the lower court held that a violation of the privilege " is not prima facie evidence" of ineffective counsel. (App. F, p. 13(7-11).)

Second, *McClure* holds that the privilege is only waived through "consent after consultation". (*Id.*, at 1243-1245.) The lower court held that consultation was not an important factor. (App. F, pp. 13, fn. 5, 17(19-26).)

Third, unlike *McClure*, no evidentiary hearing was held in Petitioner's case, and this despite Petitioner's submission of declarations from two witnesses to Smith's disclosure of the location of the victim's body and the incontrovertible evidence of other breaches in the trial transcript. Between those declarations and the trial transcript, there was ample justification for an evidentiary hearing where Smith could be asked to explain his conduct.

Thus, the decision in Petitioner's case varies from the holding in *McClure* in three foundational matters. Such contradictions should not be allowed to stand.

Reason #5: Certiorari should be granted because the District Court's harmless error analysis was directly contrary to this Court's precedent and in a way that is a recurring problem among the circuits. In presenting its prejudice analysis for Grounds #5 to #7 (all claims of ineffective assistance of counsel) the District Court failed to determine whether there was a "reasonable probability of a different outcome". Instead, the District Court asked whether, but for trial counsel's errors, the jury "could still have" found petitioner guilty. Finding that it "could", the District Court decided petitioner had not proven prejudice.

In all, the District Court applied this linguistic formula **on nine** occasions in denying Grounds #5 to #7. The following excerpts from the R&R will bring petitioner's point into focus:

"EXCERPTS FROM THE
MAGISTRATE JUDGE'S PREJUDICE
ANALYSIS FOR GROUND #5

> The prosecution's theory *could* reasonably be interpreted by the jury as calling into question Petitioner's ability to handle another failure, the loss of his business a second time to a wife who could no longer put up with his drug addiction. (App. F, p. 28(22-26).)
>
> There was also more at stake than just the business. There was the *possibility* that Petitioner would lose custody of his son. Thus, even if Trial Counsel had presented evidence of Petitioner's alleged financial independence, the jury *could still* find the prosecution's motive theory credible. As Petitioner has failed to show prejudice, this claim must fail. (*Id.*, at p. 29(1-5).) (emphasis added)

EXCERPTS FROM THE
MAGISTRATE JUDGE'S PREJUDICE
ANALYSIS FOR GROUND #6

> Even if the jury believed every word of Petitioner's testimony regarding his wife's anger, they *could still* have found him guilty of first degree murder. . . . The jury *could* reasonably have found that holding a computer cord around someone's head or neck is highly likely to lead to strangulation and death. Additionally, the jury *could still* have determined that during the struggle Petitioner had the opportunity consciously to choose between walking or running away from the house and his upset wife or killing

her. They *could* reasonably have found that Petitioner's actions following the murder were evidence of his consciousness of guilt. Finally, they *could* have found that Petitioner, based on his lies to family, friends, and police officers, was not a credible witness and therefore did not believe that this was an accident. (App. F, pp. 31(24)-32(12.) (emphasis added)

EXCERPTS FROM THE
MAGISTRATE JUDGE'S PREJUDICE
ANALYSIS FOR GROUND #7

Therefore, [Petitioner] concludes, the jury *must have* interpreted this receipt to mean that Susan knew of Petitioner's infidelities, and that destroyed his credibility which led them to convict. . . . The jury therefore *did not need to infer* that she knew of his contact with prostitutes. . . . The jury *could* therefore have determined that based on her suspicions she decided to get tested. . . . Thus, exposure of the jury to this extrinsic evidence *did not necessarily* incriminate Petitioner or unduly influence their determination of guilt or innocence. [] As discussed previously, even if the jury believed Petitioner's testimony that he was only responding in kind to his wife's rage, the jury *could* still have found him guilty. (App. F, pp. 34(20)-35(7).) (emphasis added)"

If this Court allows this case to end without appellate briefing, it will have sanctioned the resolution of three ineffective counsel claims under the *Jackson v. Virginia* insufficiency of the evidence standard, rather than the *Strickland v. Washington* standard, which obviously governs the question, and it will have broken with its own precedent.

Reason #6: Certiorari should also be granted to give reinforcement to this Court's jurisprudence regarding the

issuance of COA's. The District and Circuit Courts are under incredible pressure to manage their case loads. Yet they are underfunded and understaffed. It is all too easy to see how the rights of state prisoners to appeal can end up being given short shrift. Prisoners are a despised class and the job of vindicating the constitutional rights of *state* prisoners can easily be rationalized as one best left to the states – if not de jure, then at lease de facto. Yet this Court has a storied history of protecting the rights of *state* prisoners and has repeatedly observed that such statutory schemes as 28 U.S.C. section 2253 are not to be construed as denying the right to appeal issues which are debatable. (See *Barefoot v. Estelle*, 463 U.S. 880, 893 & fn. 4, 77 L.Ed.2d 1090, 103 S.Ct. 3383 (1983); *Miller-El v. Cockrell*, 537 U.S. 322, 154 L.Ed.2d 931, 123 S.Ct. 1029, U.S. *cert. den.*, 155 L.Ed.2d 194 (2003).)

CONCLUSION

For all of the foregoing reasons, this Court should grant Petitioner's Petition for Writ of Certiorari and order the lower courts to grant Petitioner a Certificate of Appealability. The above-referenced issues of violations of the attorney-client privilege, violations of ethical canons, violations of rules of professional responsibility, as they relate to the Sixth Amendment's guarantee of competent counsel, are of critical importance to this nation's criminal justice system and are at the core of a criminal defense attorney's duties to his client. These duties should be addressed and delineated as this Court's decision in *Nix v. Whiteside*, supra, at 475 U.S. 165-166, mandated.

Dated: August 12, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM E. GILG
Attorney for Petitioner

APPENDIX A

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

ROBERT MICHAEL KURTZ, Petitioner-Appellant, v. ROBERT L. AYERS, Warden, Respondent-Appellee.	No. 02-16843 D.C. No. CV-97-06201-AWI Eastern District California (Fresno) ORDER (Filed Mar. 18, 2003)

Before: BEEZER AND MCKEOWN, Circuit Judges.

The request for a certificate of appealability is denied. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(2).

APPENDIX B

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

ROBERT M. KURTZ,	)	**CV F 97-6201 AWI SMS P**
Petitioner,	)	**ORDER DENYING REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPEALABILITY**
v.	)	
ROBERT AYERS, Warden,	)	
Respondent.	)	(Filed Sep. 17, 2002)

On September 9, 2002, Petitioner filed a notice of appeal from the judgment entered against him on August 14, 2002, denying his petition for writ of habeas corpus. In connection with his appeal, Petitioner seeks a certificate of appealability. The controlling statute is 28 U.S.C. section 2253, which provides as follows:

> (a) In a habeas corpus proceeding or a proceeding under section 2255 before a district judge, the final order shall be subject to review, on appeal, by the court of appeals for the circuit in which the proceeding is held.
>
> (b) There shall be no right of appeal from a final order in a proceeding to test the validity of a warrant to remove to another district or place for commitment or trial a person charged with a criminal offense against the United States, or to test the validity of such person's detention pending removal proceedings.
>
> (c)(1) Unless a circuit justice or judge issues a certificate of appealability, an appeal may not be taken to the court of appeals from –

(A) the final order in a habeas corpus proceeding in which the detention complained of arises out of process issued by a State court; or

(B) the final order in a proceeding under section 2255.

(2) A certificate of appeability may issue under paragraph (1) only if the applicant has made a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right.

(3) The certificate of appealability under paragraph (1) shall indicate which specific issue or issues satisfy the showing required by paragraph (2).

In the present case, the court finds that Petitioner has not made the required substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right. Accordingly, the court hereby ORDERS that Petitioner's request for a certificate of appealability is DENIED.

DATED: Sept. 17, 2002

/s/ Anthony W. Ishii
ANTHONY W. ISHII
UNITED STATES
DISTRICT JUDGE

APPENDIX C

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

ROBERT M. KURTZ, Petitioner, v. ROBERT AYERS, Warden, Respondent.	CV F 97 6201 AWI SMS P ORDER DENYING PETITIONER'S APPLICATION FOR ENLARGEMENT OF TIME AS MOOT (Document 59) (Filed Sep. 13, 2002)

Petitioner is a state prisoner proceeding through counsel with a petition for writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254.

On August 13, 2002, the Court adopted the Findings and Recommendation of the Magistrate Judge and denied the petition for writ of habeas corpus. On August 14, 2002, judgment was entered for Respondent, and the case was dismissed.

On September 9, 2002, Petitioner filed a notice of appeal, along with an application for an extension of time to file a request for certificate of appealability. However, an extension of time is unnecessary as the notice of appeal is deemed to constitute a request for a certificate of appealability. F. R. App. P. 22(b); *United States v. Asrar*, 116 F.3d 1268, 1270 (9th Cir. 1997).

Accordingly, Petitioner's request for an extension of time to file a request for certificate of appealability is DENIED AS MOOT.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED: 9/13/02 /s/ Sandra M. Snyder
SANDRA M. SNYDER
UNITED STATES
MAGISTRATE JUDGE

APPENDIX D

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

ROBERT M. KURTZ,

vs.

ROBERT AYERS, Warden,

_____/

JUDGMENT IN A CIVIL ACTION

CV-F-97-6201-AWI/SMS P

(Filed Aug. 14, 2002)

The Findings and Recommendations issued by the Magistrate Judge on AUGUST 8, 2001, are hereby adopted in full, and

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that the petition for writ of habeas corpus is DENIED.

DATED: 8-14-02

JACK L. WAGNER, Clerk

By: /s/ [Illegible]
Deputy Clerk

APPENDIX E

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

ROBERT M. KURTZ, Petitioner, v. ROBERT AYERS, Warden, Respondent.	) CV-F-97-6201-AWI-SMS-P) **ORDER REGARDING REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**) (Doc. #47)) (Filed Aug. 13, 2002)

Petitioner is a state prisoner proceeding pro se with a Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254.

On August 8, 2001, the Magistrate Judge filed a Report and Recommendation that the Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus be DENIED. This Report and Recommendation was served on all parties and contained notice that any objections were to be filed within thirty (30) days from the date of service of that order. On November 13, 2001, Petitioner filed timely objections to the Report and Recommendation.

In accordance with the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C), this Court has conducted a *de novo* review of the case. Having carefully reviewed the entire file, including Petitioner's objections, the Court concludes that the Magistrate Judge's Report and Recommendation is supported by the record and proper analysis. Petitioner's objections present no grounds for questioning the Magistrate Judge's analysis.

Accordingly, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

1. The Report and Recommendation, filed August 8, 2001, is ADOPTED IN FULL;

2. The Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus is DENIED;

3. The Clerk of the Court is DIRECTED to enter judgment for Respondent; and,

4. All pending motions are DENIED as moot.

DATED: 8-13-02

/s/ Anthony W. Ishii
ANTHONY W. ISHII
UNITED STATES
DISTRICT JUDGE

APPENDIX F

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

ROBERT M. KURTZ, Petitioner, v. ROBERT AYERS, WARDEN Respondent.	) CV F 97-6201 AWI SMS P) REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS) (Filed Aug. 8, 2001)

Robert M. Kurtz ("Petitioner") is a state prisoner proceeding pro se with a petition for writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On August 26, 1993, a jury found Petitioner guilty of murder in the first degree of his wife Susan. It was further found true the special enhancement, use of a dangerous weapon. Petitioner was then sentenced to a term of twenty-five years to life, plus one year for the special enhancement. On August 4, 1994, Petitioner filed an appeal with the Court of Appeals for the State of California, Fifth Appellate District. On June 6, 1995, the Court of Appeals, in an unpublished opinion, affirmed Petitioner's conviction. On July 11, 1995, Petitioner filed a petition for review with the California Supreme Court. Petitioner alleged, as he had before the appellate court, that the trial court erred by failing to give CALJIC No. 8.73; prejudicial error in the exclusion of expert testimony regarding defendant's propensity for violence; and violation of the right to public trial when the trial court ordered the

courtroom locked during closing arguments. The court denied his petition on August 30, 1995, without citation or comment.

On February 26, 1997, Petitioner filed his first Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus with the Fresno County Superior Court, which was denied on March 14, 1997. On April 7, 1997, Petitioner filed a Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus with the state appellate court, which was denied on April 10, 1997. Petitioner filed a Petition for Review with the California Supreme Court on April 21, 1997. Petitioner alleged: (1) violation of due process through the inadvertent admission of hearsay evidence; and (2) ineffective assistance of counsel for failing to search Susan's wallet and for failing to request CALJIC No. 8.73. On June 18, 1997, the California Supreme Court denied Petitioner's petition, stating simply "petition for review denied on the merits."

On May 6, 1997, Petitioner filed a second Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus with the Fresno County Superior Court, which was denied on May 14, 1997. On June 24, 1997, Petitioner filed his second Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus with the state appellate court, alleging several claims of ineffective assistance of counsel. The state appellate court sent three letters to Trial Counsel, July 9, 1997, December 9, 1997, and February 17, 1998, asking for a declaration in response to Petitioner's claims.

Petitioner filed a Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus with this court on December 12, 1997, presenting the same four claims alleged in his first state habeas petition. Petitioner simultaneously filed a motion to hold his petition in abeyance while he exhausted the claims presented in his second state habeas petition. On December

26, 1997, Respondent was ordered to respond. On February 4, 1998, Respondent filed a response in opposition. Petitioner filed a reply on February 9, 1998. On March 2, 1998, Petitioner's motion to hold the petition in abeyance was denied and Respondent was ordered to respond. On April 20, 1998, Petitioner filed a petition to withdraw his petition without prejudice. On April 28, 1998, this Court issued an order clarifying its position regarding denial of Petitioner's motion to hold the petition in abeyance. The Court ordered petitioner to notify the court of his intentions and notified Respondent that Respondent need not respond until Petitioner made his intentions clear. On May 7, 1998, Petitioner filed his response notifying the court of his intent to proceed. On July 27, 1998, Respondent filed an Answer. On June 3, 1998, Petitioner filed a Traverse.

Meanwhile, having received no response from Trial Counsel, the state appellate court denied the second Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus on January 29, 1999. On April 9, 1999, Petitioner filed his second Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus with the California Supreme Court. The ten claims alleged were ineffective assistance of counsel based on the following: violation of attorney-client privilege (comprising eight of the ten claims); failing to present evidence to rebut the motive theory of the case; and failing to introduce corroborating evidence of Susan's state of mind through her "step diary."[1]

On July 19, 1999, this Court issued an order notifying Petitioner that it was ready to proceed on the merits of his

[1] "Step" refers to the twelve step program of Alcoholics Anonymous and related programs.

case, but had not received an amended petition for additional claims. The Court further specified that Petitioner had twenty (20) days to show cause why this Court should not proceed. On July 27, 1999, Petitioner filed a second motion to hold his petition in abeyance pending exhaustion of his claims in state court.

On July 28, 1999, the California Supreme Court denied Petitioner's second Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus citing *In re Clark,* 5 Cal. 4th 750 (1993); *In re Robbins,* 18 Cal. 4th 770, 780 (1998); and *In re Waltreus,* 62 Cal.2d 218, 225 (1965).

On August 6, 1999, Petitioner filed his Second Amended Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus with this court.

On October 8, 1999, the Court issued an order granting Petitioner's motion to amend the petition, denying Petitioner's motion to hold the petition in abeyance, and ordering Respondent to file a response to the second amended petition. On March 23, 2000, Petitioner filed a Motion for Expansion of the Record. On April 10, 2000, Respondent filed his Answer to the Second Amended Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus and a Notice of No Opposition to Motion for Expansion of the Record. Petitioner filed a Traverse on June 13, 2000. Petitioner then filed a request to supplement the points and authorities to his traverse and the supplemental memorandum of points and authorities in support of traverse on July 24, 2000. On August 2, 2000, the Court issued an order granting the supplementation of the memorandum of points and authorities in support of Petitioner's Traverse. On August 30, 2000, Petitioner filed an application and request for an

evidentiary hearing as to grounds one through eight (1-8) of the second amended petition.

Petitioner presents ten (10) claims in his Second Amended Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus (hereinafter "2AP"). The first eight claims are all based on ineffective assistance of counsel and include: (1) ineffective assistance of counsel through Trial Counsel's mismanagement of information covered by attorney-client privilege; (2) constructive denial of effective assistance of counsel through violations of attorney-client privilege; (3) conflict of interest based on violations of attorney-client privilege; (4) conflict of interest based on Trial Counsel's relationship with the District Attorney's Office and the Police Department; (5) Trial Counsel's failure to present evidence to rebut the prosecution's motive theory; (6) Trial Counsel's failure to present corroborative evidence regarding Susan's state of mind; (7) ineffective assistance of counsel and due process violations through Trial Counsel's failure to inventory Susan's wallet before allowing its admission into evidence resulting in admission of damaging hearsay evidence; and (8) Trial Counsel's failure to request CALJIC No. 8.73 (relating to provocation and the degree of murder). The remaining two claims are: (9) violation of due process and the right to a jury trial through the trial court's failure to give, sua sponte, CALJIC, No. 8.73; and (10) insufficient evidence to support a finding of first degree murder.

FACTUAL HISTORY[2]

Petitioner and Susan Kurtz owned a computer store, MacSource, in Fresno. They had a troubled marriage due largely to Petitioner's alcohol and cocaine use. Because of Petitioner's cocaine use, Susan had removed his name from the MacSource checking account.

The couple separated between August and October of 1992. They reunited, and Susan became pregnant with their second child. In January of 1993, Susan began to do her work from their home because she was having a difficult pregnancy.

Petitioner was in recovery from his addictions and attended Alcoholics Anonymous ("AA") meetings. As part of the AA program, members are required to have a sponsor, and work through a twelve (12) step program. The fourth step requires the creation of a personal inventory of the member's life, including a list of wrongs they committed and the people they resented.

On Tuesday, January 5, Petitioner went to an AA meeting. Petitioner's sponsor, Reed Harris, noticed that Petitioner was agitated that evening. Petitioner revealed to Harris that Susan had found his fourth step notes.

On Thursday, January 7, 1993, Petitioner reported his wife missing. Petitioner claimed his wife had left their home at 9:30 p.m. that evening. Her car was found at their business; Susan's coat and the keys to the store were inside. Susan's purse, some cash ($75.00) and a computer

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[2] The following facts are summarized from the state appellate court slip opinion issued June 6, 1995.

printer were missing and the back door appeared to have been tampered with. Police officers filed a missing persons report.

On Monday, January 11, 1993, Petitioner went out to dinner with his mother and stepfather, Kathy and Jerry Hamilton. During dinner, Petitioner told them Susan was dead. Petitioner claimed Susan committed suicide in the garage. Petitioner arranged to turn himself in to his attorney the following morning. Later that same evening he told his AA sponsor, Reed Harris, about Susan's suicide.

On Tuesday, January 12, police executed a search warrant at Petitioner's home. Petitioner arrived during the search of his home in order to get a change of clothes. He was allowed to get the clothes and leave. He then went to his attorney's office. While the search warrant was still being executed, Petitioner's attorney telephoned the house and told the officers the location of Susan's body.

Susan's body was found in the home on the closet floor of the southeast bedroom. A bed had been pushed up against the closet door and there were air fresheners in the room and in the closet. Susan's feet were bound with duct tape and her body was wrapped in several layers of plastic.

It was the pathologist's opinion that Susan died from strangulation. The pathologist found evidence of both ligature and manual strangulation. Susan also had a black eye and injuries to her tongue. The doctor testified that in his strong opinion these injuries were not consistent with Susan hanging herself. Susan was five feet six inches tall and weighed two hundred and forty-two pounds at the time of the autopsy. The fetus she was carrying was eight to ten weeks old.

Defense

Petitioner testified at trial. He said Susan had found his fourth step paperwork. In this document Petitioner had detailed all of the extra-marital sexual encounters that he had engaged in while using drugs. Petitioner said that Susan became very upset and wanted to talk to him but he refused. The next morning Susan again tried to talk with him, which lead to a physical altercation. Petitioner said that during this fight he was trying to restrain or control Susan with a computer cable and accidentally choked her to death.[3]

Petitioner testified that he hid Susan's body because he was overwhelmed with guilt and did not think anyone would believe him. Petitioner admitted he had been dishonest with the police, his lawyer, and many others.

Petitioner was examined by Dr. Phillip Hamm, a licensed psychologist, who opined that immediately after Susan's death Petitioner was suffering from post traumatic stress disorder. He had an overwhelming guilt reaction and believed that no one would believe what really happened. Several witnesses testified that they knew Petitioner and that he did not have a reputation for violence. In addition, witnesses testified that it was not unusual for Petitioner to have a computer cord draped around his neck while he was working on computers.

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[3] On January 2, 1993, Petitioner weighted 155 pounds.

STANDARD OF PROCEDURAL REVIEW

a. Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act

On April 24, 1996, Congress enacted the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act 1996 ("AEDPA"), which applies to all petitions for writ of habeas corpus filed after its enactment. *Lindh v. Murphy*, 521 U.S. 320 (1997); *Jeffries v. Wood*, 114 F.3d 1484, 1499 (9th Cir. 1997) (en banc). Since petitioner filed the instant petition on April 6, 1999, after the enactment of the AEDPA, the Act is applicable to his petition.

Under the AEDPA, a federal court may grant a petition for writ of habeas corpus on a claim that the state court heard on the merits in only three instances. First, if the state court's decision was contrary to a decision of the Supreme Court or resulted in "a conclusion opposite that of a decision by [the Supreme Court] on a question of law or . . . differently than a decision by [the Supreme Court] on a set of materially indistinguishable facts." *Williams v. Taylor,* 529 U.S. 362, 412-13 (2000); 28 U.S.C. § 2254(d)(1). Second, where the state court uses the correct governing legal principle as set forth by the Supreme Court but unreasonably applies that principle to the facts of the prisoner's case, the federal court may grant a petition for writ of habeas corpus. *Williams,* 529 U.S. at 412-13; 28 U.S.C. § 2254(d)(1). "Unreasonable" must be distinguished from "incorrect," as the application of law to the facts must be more than incorrect in the federal court's independent view, it must also be unreasonable. *Williams,* 529 U.S. at 410-11. Finally, a petition may be granted where the adjudication of the claim in state court resulted in a decision that was based on an unreasonable determination of the facts in light of the evidence presented in the State court proceeding." 28 U.S.C. § 2254(d)(2). In addition, the

state court's factual determinations must be presumed correct, and the federal court must accept all factual findings made by the state court unless the petitioner can rebut "the presumption of correctness by clear and convincing evidence." 28 U.S.C. § 2254(e)(1).

When analyzing a claim that there has been an unreasonable application of federal law, the court must first consider whether the state court erred; only after making that determination may the court then consider whether any error involved an unreasonable application of controlling law within the meaning of § 2254(d). *Van Tran v. Lindsey,* 212 F.3d 1143, 1155 (9th Cir.), *cert denied*, 121 S. Ct. 340 (2000).

b. Procedural Default

Respondent contends the first five claims[4] raised in the instant petition are procedurally barred from federal review. Petitioner presented these claims in a second habeas corpus petition to the California Supreme Court on April 9, 1999. The California Supreme Court denied the petition citing *In re Clark,* 5 Cal. 4th 750 (1993); *In re Robbins,* 18 Cal 4th 770, 780 (1998); and *In re Waltreus*, 62 Cal.2d 218, 225 (1965).

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[4] Respondent discusses only five of the first six claims, consolidating claims two, three, and four: (2) constructive denial of effective assistance of counsel through failure to develop a candid attorney-client relationship; (3) conflict of interest based on violation of attorney-client privilege; and (4) conflict of interest because of Counsel's relationship with the Fresno District Attorney's Office and Police Department.

There are limitations as to when a federal court should invoke procedural default and refuse to evaluate the merits of a claim because the petitioner violated a state's procedural rules. First, procedural default can only block a claim in federal court if the state court "clearly and expressly states that its judgment rests on a state procedural bar." *Harris v. Reed,* 489 U.S. 255, 263 (1989). For California Supreme Court decisions, this means the court must specifically have stated that it denied relief on a procedural ground. *Ylst v. Nunnemaker,* 501 U.S. 797, 803 (1991); *Acosta-Huerta v. Estelle,* 7 F.3d 139, 142 (9th Cir. 1993); *Hunter v. Aispuro,* 982 F.2d 344, 347-48 (9th Cir. 1991). If the California Supreme Court denies a petitioner's claims without any comment or citation, the federal court must consider it a decision on the merits. *Hunter,* 982 F.2d at 347-48.

Second, a federal court may only impose a procedural bar on claims if the procedural rule that the state used to deny relief is "firmly established and regularly followed." *O'Dell v Thompson,* 502 U.S. 995, 998 (1991) (statement of Blackmun joined by Stevens and O'Connor respecting the denial of certiorari); *Ford v. Georgia,* 498 U.S. 411, 423-24 (1991); *James v. Kentucky,* 466 U.S. 341, 348-51 (1984); *Fields v. Calderon,* 125 F.3d 757, 760 (9th Cir. 1997); *Calderon v. United States Dist. Court (Bean),* 96 F.3d 112, 129 (9th Cir. 1996).

A federal court may still consider a procedurally defaulted claim if the petitioner can demonstrate (1) cause for the default and actual prejudice resulting from the alleged violation of federal law, or (2) a fundamental miscarriage of justice. *Harris,* 489 U.S. at 262. In the instant petition, the Court declines to address the procedural default argument and will analyze the merits of the petition.

DISCUSSION

I. INEFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE OF COUNSEL

Petitioner's first eight claims are based on ineffective assistance of counsel. A claim of ineffective assistance of counsel constitutes a claim of denial of the Sixth Amendment right to counsel, which guarantees not only assistance, but effective assistance of counsel. *Strickland v. Washington,* 466 U.S. 668, 686 (1984). The standard for judging any claim of ineffectiveness must be whether counsel's actions so undermined the proper function of the adversarial process that the trial cannot be relied upon as having produced a just result. *Id.*

In a petition for writ of habeas corpus alleging ineffective assistance of counsel, the court must consider two factors. First, the Petitioner must show that counsel's performance was deficient, requiring a showing that counsel made errors so serious that he or she was not functioning as the "counsel" guaranteed by the Sixth Amendment. *Strickland,* 466 U.S. at 687. The Petitioner must show that counsel's representation fell below an objective standard of reasonableness. *Id.* at 688. The Petitioner must identify counsel's alleged acts or omissions that were not the result of reasonable professional judgment considering the circumstances. *Id.*; *see also United States v. Quintero-Barraza,* 78 F.3d 1344, 1348 (9th Cir. 1995). Judicial scrutiny of counsel's performance is highly deferential. A court indulges a strong presumption that counsel's conduct falls within the wide range of reasonable professional assistance. *Strickland,* 466 U.S. at 689; *Sanders y. Ratelle,* 21 F.3d 1446, 1456 (9th Cir.1994).

Second, Petitioner must show that counsel's errors were so egregious as to deprive petitioner of a fair trial,

one whose result is reliable. *Strickland,* 466 U.S. at 687. Petitioner must establish that there is "a reasonable probability that, but for counsel's unprofessional errors, the result of the proceeding would have been different. A reasonable probability is a probability sufficient to undermine confidence in the outcome." *Id.* at 694; *see also Williams,* 529 U.S. at 416-17; *Jackson v. Calderon,* 211 F.3d 1148, 1154 (9th Cir. 2000); *Laboa v. Calderon,* 224 F.3d 972, 980-81 (9th Cir. 2000). A court need not determine whether counsel's performance was deficient before examining the prejudice suffered by the petitioner as a result of the alleged deficiencies. *Strickland,* 466 U.S. at 697. Since it is necessary to prove prejudice, any deficiency that does not result in prejudice must necessarily fail.

A. Attorney-Client Privilege

Petitioner alleges ineffective assistance of counsel based on Trial Counsel's alleged breach of the attorney-client privilege by revealing, or causing others to reveal, information that was the subject of confidential communication between Petitioner and Trial Counsel. Petitioner asserts that Trial Counsel had an affirmative duty to advise him of the nature and scope of the attorney-client privilege, to inform him regarding the legal ramification of every disclosure, and to seek Petitioner's consent prior to each disclosure, which he failed to do.

The attorney-client privilege is an evidentiary privilege that provides for a client to refuse to disclose, and to prevent another from disclosing, a confidential communication between the client and his/her lawyer. Cal. Evid. Code § 954; Fed. R. Evid. 501. This privilege applies to communications which are intended to be confidential,

between an attorney client, for the purpose of obtaining legal assistance. *Fisher v. United States,* 425 U.S. 391, 403 (1976); *see also,* Cal. Evid. Code § 952, and § 953; *People v. Gionis,* 9 Cal. 4th 1196, 1207-8 (1995).

The purpose of the evidentiary privilege is to safeguard the confidential relationship between a client and counsel so as to promote full and open disclosure of facts and tactics surrounding the case. *People v. Flores,* 71 Cal. App. 3d 559, 563 (1977). Without the ability to make a full disclosure of the facts to the attorney, the client risks inadequate representation: " 'Unless he makes known to the lawyer all the facts, the advice which follows will be useless, if not misleading. . . . ' " *City & County of San Francisco v. Superior Court,* 37 Cal. 2d 227, 235 (1951). Thus, by encouraging complete disclosure, the attorney-client privilege enables the attorney to provide suitable legal representation. *Id.*

The privilege may be waived by the client who, without coercion, consents to disclosure of the privileged communication. Cal. Evid. Code § 912(a). Consent to disclosure is manifested by any statement, or other conduct, of the holder of the privilege indicating consent to the disclosure, including failure to claim the privilege in any proceeding in which the holder has the legal standing and opportunity to claim the privilege. *Id.*

When a party asserts the attorney-client privilege, it is incumbent upon that party to prove The preliminary fact that a privilege exists. *Ralls v. United States,* 52 F.3d 223, 225 (9th Cir. 1995); *see also State Farm Fire & Cas. Co. v. Superior Court,* 54 Cal. App. 4th 625, 639 (1997). The party claiming privilege has the burden to show that the communication sought to be suppressed falls within

the terms of the statute. *D.I. Chadbourne, Inc. v. Superior Court,* 60 Cal.2d 723, 729 (1964). Thus to show a violation of attorney-client privilege, Petitioner must show that the communications were confidential, made by a client, to an attorney, for the purpose of obtaining legal assistance or advice.

The attorney-client privilege is an evidentiary rule and not a constitutional right. *See Maness v. Meyers.* 419 U.S. 449, 466 n.15 (1975); *Clutchette v. Rushen.* 770 F.2d 1469, 1471 (9th Cir. 1985). In the instant petition, Petitioner alleges that Trial Counsel violated the attorney-client privilege and thus violated the Sixth Amendment right to counsel. However, while a violation of attorney-client privilege, if proven, may be a violation of ethical canons, it is not prima facie evidence of unreasonable or incompetent assistance of counsel.[5] In order to make a successful ineffective assistance of counsel claim, Petitioner must show that the revelation of reformation covered by attorney-client privilege was outside the broad scope of reasonable and competent behavior and that these errors resulted in prejudice to Petitioner's defense.

1. Mismanagement of Information Covered by Attorney-Client Privilege.

Petitioner's first claim centers on the statements made by Petitioner to Jerry and Kathy Hamilton on the

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[5] Petitioner does not cite, nor can this Court find any statement of law which holds that counsel has an affirmative duty to inform his client of the protections of attorney-client privilege before seeking consent to disclose the privileged information.

evening of January 11, and statements made to his attorney on the morning of January 12, 1993. This claim is set out in four sub-claims: (a) disclosure of the location of Susan's body by Trial Counsel; (b) statements by Jerry Hamilton regarding privileged communications; (c) questions regarding Petitioner's state of mind leading up to his testimony; and (d) disclosure of privileged statements by Petitioner to his parents the night before his meeting with his attorney.

On the evening of January 11, 1993, Petitioner had dinner with his mother and step-father, Kathy and Jerry Hamilton. Jerry Hamilton testified that at this dinner Petitioner told him and his wife that Petitioner had found Susan in the garage, where she had apparently committed suicide. (R.T. at 117). Mr. Hamilton stated that Petitioner said that he and Susan had had a fight and he had left the house with his son. When he returned Petitioner opened the garage door, found Susan on the floor with a cord around her neck, and he had then closed the garage door. (R.T. at 117-18).

Reed Harris, Petitioner's AA sponsor, testified that on the night of January 11, 1993, at approximately 10 p.m. (the same night as the dinner with the Hamilton's) Petitioner called and asked to meet with him at the Hamiltons' home. (R.T. at 162-63). After he arrived they (Jerry Hamilton, Petitioner, and Reed Harris) drove to Petitioner's home. (R.T. at 163). Harris testified that once in his own home, Petitioner told him that Susan had found his fourth step paperwork, they got into an argument, Petitioner left the house, and when he returned he found his wife dead on the floor of the garage. (R.T. at 164). Petitioner told Harris that Susan had committed suicide. (R.T. at 164). Harris also testified that Petitioner told him that rather

than call the police Petitioner felt if he hid the body people would forget. (R.T. at 165).

The next morning, January 12, 1993, Petitioner and his step-father, met with Trial Counsel for the first time. During this meeting Petitioner told Trial Counsel that his wife's body was in the spare bedroom/computer room of Petitioner's home. Petitioner and/or his step-father also told Trial Counsel that the police were currently searching Petitioner's home. (Kurtz Decl. p.2, Hamilton Decl. p.2). Petitioner states that Trial Counsel called Petitioner's home twice during that meeting and spoke with police officers (Kurtz Decl. p. 2), and during the second call put his hand over the phone and asked Petitioner "Should we tell them?" Trial Counsel then told the officers searching the home where the body was located. (Hamilton Decl. pp. 2-3). Jerry Hamilton states that he doesn't remember how Petitioner responded but that Petitioner did not object. (Hamilton Decl. p.3).

a. Disclosure of Statements by Petitioner to his Parents.[6]

Petitioner alleges that the statements made to his parents at dinner on January 11, 1993, the night before he met with his attorney, are covered by attorney-client privilege and that Trial Counsel erred by failing to assert that privilege regarding the testimony of Jerry and Kathy Hamilton. Petitioner states in his declaration that prior to the dinner with his mother and step-father he had retained counsel but was unable to disclose the facts of his

[6] This sub-claim appears as Petitioner's "1(d) ."

case because he was so depressed, verging on suicidal. Petitioner felt that only if one or both of his parents came to the meeting would he be able to tell Trial Counsel the necessary facts. Thus, Petitioner concludes his statements at the January 11th dinner were "reasonably necessary for the transmission of the information [to the lawyer] or the accomplishment of the purpose for which the lawyer [was] consulted" under California Evidence Code § 952. (2AP at 27-28).

Petitioner cites *Insurance Co. of North America v. Superior Court,* 108 Cal. App. 3d 758, 771 (1980), to support his proposition that privilege protects communications to parties other than counsel and client. (2AP at 27). Petitioner's reasoning is in error. In *Insurance Co. of North America,* the court was asked to decide if prejudice was waived by the presence of closely affiliated parties during an attorney-client meeting. *Id.* at 762. Here, the question is not whether the presence or absence of Jerry and Kathy Hamilton destroyed privilege but whether the statements made to them, the night before his meeting with Trial Counsel, are covered by the attorney-client privilege.

California case law upholding the extension of the privilege to communications made to parents and "for the transmission of information" focuses on the needs of minor children, where the parent is acting under the direction of counsel. *Jesse Richard De Los Santos v. The Superior Court of Los Angeles County,* 27 Cal. 3d 677, 683-84 (1980) (holding that the parent, of minor child, obtaining information for the purpose of transmitting to attorney may assert privilege). Petitioner is not a minor, and he was not acting pursuant to the advice or direction of counsel at the January 11th dinner, therefore Petitioner's statements to his parents at dinner do not fall within the statutory

scheme. As they cannot survive the privileged communication analysis, they are non-privileged statements. Further they are the admissions of a party and are therefore exempt from the hearsay rule and would be admissible in court. Cal. Evid. Code § 1220.

Even if these communications were privileged, Petitioner waived the privilege by disclosing the same information to Reed Harris. *Kaiser Foundation Hosp. v. Superior Court,* 66 Cal. App. 1217, 1226 (1998) (citing Cal. Evid. Code § 912(a)). Reed Harris testified to these statements at trial and Petitioner does not claim that Harris' testimony was privileged in any way. Thus, by revealing privileged information to a third party Petitioner waived any privilege that may have existed.

b. Disclosure of the Location of Body of the Victim.[7]

Petitioner alleges that Trial Counsel erred by calling the police and telling them the location of his wife's body. Petitioner argues that he was not advised that he had the right to prevent Trial Counsel from disclosing this information. Petitioner further alleges that he did not actually consent to this disclosure as he made no response when Counsel asked if they should tell the police where to find the body. (Kurtz Decl. p.2).

A defendant cannot prevail on an ineffective assistance of counsel claim for counsel's action that occurred prior to when the constitutional right to counsel attaches.

[7] This sub-claim appears as Petitioner's "1(a)."

Wainright v. Torna, 455 U.S. 586, 587-88 (1982) (holding no claim where petitioner had no constitutional right to counsel at a state post-conviction stage); *Claudio v. Scully,* 982 F.2d 798, 801-2 (2d Cir. 1992) (finding no claim where counsel advised surrender and confession, before advising client of the possible charges or defenses to murder). The protections of the Sixth Amendment right to counsel are not triggered by the mere existence of an attorney-client relationship, but rather by the initiation of adversarial judicial proceedings. *Maine v. Moulton,* 474 U.S. 159 (1985); *see also Moran v. Burbine,* 475 U.S. 412, 430 (1986) ("by its very terms [the Sixth Amendment] is applicable only when the Government's role shifts from investigation to accusation"). The Sixth Amendment right to counsel attaches only at or after the initiation of adversary judicial proceedings against the defendant. *United States v. Gouveia.* 467 U.S. 180, 187 (1984). The disclosure of the location of Susan's body took place before Petitioner was arrested and before formal charges had been filed. Petitioner was under investigation but was not subject to adversarial judicial proceedings. Therefore, the Sixth Amendment right to counsel had not yet attached, and there can be no ineffective assistance of counsel claim based on these facts.

Even if the Sixth Amendment right to counsel had attached, Petitioner has not shown that Trial Counsel's actions where either unreasonable or unethical. The declaration of Jerry Hamilton, provided by Petitioner, states that Trial Counsel did ask if they should tell the police where the body was located. Petitioner was clearly presented with the opportunity to say "no". Even if he was ignorant of the law, he was asked what he wanted to do.

Presented with this choice he did not object to the disclosure. These actions can reasonably be interpreted as consent to a waiver of attorney-client privilege.

Finally, Petitioner cannot and has not shown prejudice. Even if Trial Counsel had not disclosed the location of the body to the police, as the police were in the process of searching the house, and they would have found the body anyway. Finding the body in the house would have allowed them to link Petitioner to the body. Further, Petitioner had already told his mother, step-father and AA sponsor Reed Harris that he knew his wife was dead. He told Reed Harris that he had hidden the body. Petitioner had already disclosed to non-privileged sources that he knew (inferentially) where the body was located. Therefore, Trial Counsel's disclosure of the location of the body was non-prejudicial.

c. Testimony by Jerry Hamilton Regarding Privileged Communications[8].

Petitioner contends that the testimony by his step-father Jerry Hamilton during the preliminary hearing and trial revealed the details of the meeting between himself and his counsel. Petitioner contends that Counsel erred by not claiming attorney-client privilege at either time to prevent this testimony.

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[8] This sub-claim appears as Petitioner's "1(b)."

In this claim Petitioner levels allegations of violation of attorney-client privilege at both the preliminary hearing and the trial. The Court has only pages 20-25 of the clerk's transcript. As the statements made at the preliminary hearing are not themselves in dispute, the Court will proceed without further review of that record.

Jerry Hamilton testified at the preliminary hearing that at dinner on the night of January 11, Petitioner told him and his wife that Susan Kurtz was dead. (CT at 22). He also testified that this was essentially the same story that Petitioner had told his attorney on the morning of January 12, 1993. (CT at 23-24). Petitioner contends that prior to Trial Counsel's cross-examination, all that Hamilton had testified to was that Petitioner had said he knew his wife was dead. It was Trial Counsel's questions to Hamilton which brought before the court the story of suicide and Petitioner's knowledge of the location of the body.

Accepting, without finding, that this was not an objectively reasonable performance on the part of Trial Counsel, Petitioner cannot show prejudice. The police had found Susan's body hidden in a closet in Petitioner's house. They had a pathologist's testimony stating that the evidence was inconsistent with suicide. They also had Jerry Hamilton's testimony regarding the non-privileged statements by Petitioner that he knew his wife was dead, and he had found her body in the garage. As Respondent points out, the purpose of a preliminary hearing is only to determine whether there is probable cause to bring charges. Absent the contested testimony, the judge could still have reasonably found probable cause on these facts. Thus no prejudice can be found.

At trial Hamilton testified as a witness for the prosecution. During cross-examination by Trial Counsel, Hamilton said that on January 12th, while present at a meeting between Petitioner and Trial Counsel, he heard Petitioner tell Trial Counsel where Susan's body was located. He then saw Trial Counsel call Petitioner's home, and heard

him tell officers to look in the computer/bedroom closet. (RT at 124-25). On redirect the prosecutor questioned Hamilton further about what was said during the meeting between Petitioner and Trial Counsel. (RT at 134). Hamilton testified that Petitioner told Trial Counsel that Susan had committed suicide. *Id.*

Petitioner states that this was a violation of the attorney-client privilege and resulted in ineffective assistance of counsel. Again, accepting, without finding, that Trial Counsel's performance was objectively unreasonable, Petitioner cannot show prejudice. Petitioner alleges that prejudice results because his story regarding Susan committing suicide did not need to come out. Had Trial Counsel effectively limited the scope of Jerry Hamilton's testimony to exclude the privileged material, Petitioner contends, he could simply have told his story regarding the physical confrontation between himself and Susan Kurtz. Petitioner's argument is flawed. He had already told his mother, step-father and Reed Harris that he had found Susan dead in the garage from apparent suicide. All of those communications were outside the scope of attorney-client privilege. Petitioner's lies would still have come before the jury through these three witnesses.

d. Testimony regarding Petitioner's state of mind leading up to trial testimony[9]

Petitioner alleges that Trial Counsel farther erred by allowing Petitioner to testify about the circumstances leading up to his testimony at trial. At trial Petitioner

[9] This sub-claim appears as Petitioner's "1(c)."

testified that it was a physical struggle and not suicide which caused Susan's death. Petitioner, in response to Trial counsel's questioning, testified that his current testimony differed from his previous statements to his friends and family because Trial Counsel told him his story of Susan's suicide didn't fit with the facts uncovered prior to trial. Trial counsel also asked Petitioner if he had lied to his attorney at their initial meeting. Petitioner contends that these questions and the testimony they elicited were privileged information.

Petitioner is correct that the substance of these statements were privileged communications. However, by testifying about these statements Petitioner tacitly, if not expressly, consented to waive the privilege. It was Petitioner's right and decision to take the stand, and he makes no allegations of coercion concerning this choice.

"A fair assessment of attorney performance requires that every effort be made to eliminate the distorting effects of hindsight, to reconstruct the circumstances of counsel's challenged conduct, and to evaluate the conduct from counsel's perspective at the time." *Strickland,* 466 U.S. at 689. Petitioner's allegations call into question the underlying theory of Trial Counsel's defense case on Petitioner's behalf. The initial theory of the defense case, based on the information provided by Petitioner, was that Petitioner was not responsible for Susan's death but rather she had killed herself and that Petitioner's feelings of guilt and trauma had prevented him from notifying the police immediately. At trial the theory changed, probably, as Petitioner points out, because the pathologist's testimony at the preliminary hearing ruled out suicide. The defense theory was that, suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Petitioner was unable to admit the truth

to himself or the authorities, and that now he would tell everyone the truth. As part of this defense, Trial Counsel put all of the lies on the table to lend credibility to this "clean breast" theory. This included Petitioner's inability to admit even to his own attorney what had really happened. Counsel's approach when viewed piece by piece may seem unorthodox but not beyond the scope of reasonable or competent given the facts of the case and the information provided, piece meal, by Petitioner to his Counsel. As these actions were not unreasonable, the Court need not reach the issue of prejudice.

In sum, Petitioner's first claim of ineffective assistance of counsel based on mismanagement of information covered by the attorney-client privilege must fail because: (1) statements to Petitioner's parents were not covered by the attorney-client privilege; (2) the Sixth Amendment right to counsel had not yet attached when Trial Counsel revealed the location of Susan's body, nor were his actions prejudicial; (3) Jerry Hamilton's testimony was not prejudicial to the defense; and (4) Petitioner waived the attorney-client privilege with regard to his own testimony.

2. Violation of Attorney-Client Privilege Resulting in Failure to Present Exculpatory Evidence Regarding Petitioner's State of Mind Following Murder.

Petitioner alleges that Trial Counsel's abuse of the attorney-client privilege had a chilling effect upon Petitioner's ability to trust and to confide in him, which resulted in constructive denial of effective assistance of counsel. Petitioner argues that he is constitutionally entitled to an attorney-client relationship in which he can fully disclose the facts of his case in order to seek legal

advice. (2AP at 34). Petitioner states that he committed certain financial crimes, and that his fear of these crimes being discovered prevented him from calling the police when Susan died. (2AP at 32). Petitioner did not share this information with Trial Counsel because the disclosure of the location of his wife's body and his step-father's testimony at the preliminary hearing led Petitioner to distrust him. (2AP at 33-34). Thus, Petitioner argues, Trial Counsel's alleged violation of the attorney client privilege resulted in complete denial of Petitioner's Sixth Amendment right and prejudice should be presumed.

Insofar as this claim rises or falls upon Petitioner's prior arguments that there has been a violation of the attorney-client privilege, this claim fails because the Court has found no violation of the attorney-client privilege. The Court otherwise finds the substance of Petitioner's argument to be without merit.

The Sixth Amendment does not guarantee a "meaningful relationship" between an accused and his publicly appointed counsel, but merely a right to competent counsel. *Morris v. Slappy*, 461 U.S. 1, 14 (1983). Individuals who can afford to retain counsel have a qualified right to obtain counsel of their choice, *Releford v. United States,* 288 F.2d 298, 301 (9th Cir. 1961), and privately retained attorneys are held to the same standard as public defenders regarding a criminal defendant's Sixth Amendment right to effective assistance of counsel. *Cuyler v. Sullivan,* 446 U.S. 336. 334-35 (1980). Thus, Petitioner is in error that he has a constitutional right to a relationship of trust and candor with his attorney, rather his constitutional right is to competent representation, consequently prejudice cannot be presumed.

In the alternative, failure to request a change or substitution in counsel before, or during trial, is a waiver of any claim of ineffective assistance of counsel based on the breakdown of the attorney-client relationship. *Thomas v. Wainwright,* 767 F.2d 738, 743 (11th Cir. 1985). In the instant case, Petitioner claims to have been alarmed at Counsel's trial tactics (i.e., disclosure of information that Petitioner deemed confidential) as early as January 12, 1993, when Trial counsel told the police where Susan's body was, and as late as the date of the preliminary hearing. Petitioner had through late August of 1993 in which either to obtain new counsel or, at the very least, to notify the trial court that Petitioner was unhappy with counsel and needed time to obtain new counsel. Petitioner failed to take any action to alert the court or Counsel of his feelings. Therefore, this claim must fail.

B. Conflict of Interest Standard

Petitioner's claims three and four allege ineffective assistance of counsel based on conflict of interest. First, Petitioner claims that Trial Counsel's mishandling of privileged communications exposed him to a potential malpractice action, thus creating a conflict of interest. Second, Petitioner claims that Trial Counsel's ongoing relationship with the Fresno Police Department and the District Attorney's Office created a conflict of interest, thereby affecting his ability to defend Petitioner's interests effectively. (2AP at 38-50).

Under the Sixth Amendment, a criminal defendant has the right to be represented by counsel whose loyalties are undivided. *Wood v. Georgia,* 450 U.S. 261, 271 (1981); *Mannhalt v. Reed,* 847 F.2d 576, 579 (9th Cir. 1988). "To

establish a Sixth Amendment violation based on a conflict of interest, a defendant must show (1) that counsel actively represented conflicting interests, and (2) that an actual conflict of interest adversely affected his lawyer's performance." *Mannhalt,* 847 F.2d at 579 (*citing Cuyler v. Sullivan,* 446 U.S. 335, 350 (1980)). Actual conflict must be proven "through a factual showing on the record." *Morris v. California,* 966 F.2d 448, 455 (9th Cir. 1992). To show adverse effect, Petitioner "need only show that some effect on counsel's handling of particular aspects of the trial was 'likely.' *United States v. Miskinis,* 966 F.2d 1263, 1268 (9th Cir. 1992) (*citing Mannhalt* 847 F.2d at 583). Adverse effect is not the same as showing prejudice, but rather requires factual assertions regarding particular aspects of the trial that may have been handled differently. *Id.* Both *Mannhalt* and *Miskinis* pointed to specific areas of defense that could have been pursued but weren't, presumably because of the attorney's conflict of interest. *Mannhalt,* 847 F.2d at 581; *Miskinis,* 966 F.2d at 1268.

Therefore, a petitioner must show that an actual conflict existed and point to specific areas where that conflict may have affected counsel's representation.

1. Trial Counsel had Conflict of Interest Due to Mismanagement of Attorney-Client Privilege Communications.

Petitioner alleges that Counsel's violation of the attorney-client privilege[10] resulted in an actual conflict of

[10] Here Petitioner refers to errors alleged in ground I: disclosure of the location of the body; Jerry Hamilton's testimony regarding the

(Continued on following page)

interest which deprived Petitioner of effective assistance of counsel. Petitioner contends that had he been informed of the nature and scope of attorney-client privilege, he would never have waived the privilege. Petitioner contends that Trial Counsel's violation of attorney-client privilege exposed Counsel to a potential malpractice suit, negative publicity, and loss of client fees, all of which Trial Counsel must have known. (2AP at 38-39). This threat to Trial Counsel created a conflict of interest which impaired Counsel's performance by preventing him from disclosing to Petitioner the scope of the attorney-client privilege and requiring continued violation of the privilege.[11]

Petitioner cites two cases for the proposition that where malpractice is alleged, conflict of interest will be found, *Lopez v. Sculley,* 58 F.3d 38, 41 (2d Cir. 1995) and *United States v. Shorter* 54 F.3d 1248, 1252-53 (7th Cir. 1995). However, these cases are factually distinguishable from the present case. In both of these cases the defendant/client alleged ineffective assistance of counsel or acts which constituted malpractice during the course of their criminal trial or sentencing while counsel actively represented them. These accusations had the double effect of putting their respective attorneys in the position of denying the charges, contradicting their clients and violating their duty of loyalty, thus creating an actual (as opposed to

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attorney-client meeting of January 12; Jerry and Kathy Hamilton's testimony about communications during the dinner on January 11; and Petitioner's own testimony regarding communications between himself and counsel. (2AP at 40).

[11] This Court initially notes that insofar as the Court has already found no violation of the attorney-client privilege, this claim accordingly has no merit.

potential) conflict. *Lopez,* 58 F.3d at 40-41; *see also Shorter,* 54 F.3d at 1252-53. In the present case the Petitioner did not accuse his counsel of malpractice or ineffective assistance until after the trial and sentencing were complete. Thus, Petitioner has at most established a potential conflict of interest between himself and counsel.

Where only a potential conflict of interest exists, Petitioner must show that counsel's fictions were unreasonable and prejudicial to his defense. *Strickland,* 466 U.S. at 692 (stating that prejudice is presumed only where there is actual conflict of interest). Without a showing of prejudice, a "theoretical" or "potential" conflict is insufficient to constitute actual conflict; instead, Trial Counsel must have actively represented conflicting interests. *Bonin v. Calderon,* 59 F.3d 815, 827 (9th Cir. 1995). Petitioner has not made such a showing, and thus this claim must fail.

2. Conflict of Interest on the Part of Trial Counsel Due to Prior Favorable Treatment from Law Enforcement.

Petitioner alleges that Trial Counsel's performance was impaired by actual conflict of interest caused by the special treatment he received from the District Attorney's Office and the Fresno Police Department. Petitioner contends that during his trial, Trial Counsel was negotiating for a consultant position for which he would be hired in 1995. Petitioner further contends that Trial Counsel was beholden to the District Attorney's Office and the Fresno Police Department for favorable treatment that he had

received and would continue to need because of his alcoholism and penchant for drunk driving. (2AP at 41).[12]

Petitioner's allegations at failure to disclose alleged negotiations for future employment by Trial Counsel constitutes actual conflict are in error. Mere acceptance of, or application for, a job is not a per se conflict of interest. *United States v. Unruh*, 855 F.2d 1363, 1379 (9th Cir. 1987). *United States v. Horton*, 845 F.2d 1414, 1419 (7th Cir. 1998) (holding that serious candidacy for a position with the State will not create a conflict of interest as a matter of law). Nor will the failure of counsel to notify his or her client that he or she is being considered for such a position result in actual conflict as a matter of law. *Horton*, 845 F.2d at 1419. Petitioner must show that "the defense attorney was required to make a choice advancing his own interest to the detriment of his client's interests." *Id.*

Here, Trial Counsel did not take a position with the District Attorney's Office until two (2) years after the close of Petitioner's case and after he had retired from private practice. Further, the position involved Trial Counsel instructing new attorneys on trial techniques, not actually advocating for the prosecution. (2AP Ex. 7 at 1). Thus, this fails to meet the factual elements of the cases Petitioner cites, and he fails to establish more than a potential prejudice.

Similarly, allegations of Trial Counsel's criminal record and alleged special treatment alone are not enough

[12] The Court notes that nowhere in the 2AP does Petitioner allege Trial Counsel was under the influence of alcohol during any of the Petitioner's criminal proceedings.

to demonstrate actual conflict. *United States v. Baker,* No. 99-56718, 2001 U.S. App. LEXIS 5620, at *9 (9th Cir. April 5, 2001) (holding that bare allegation of conflict based on attorney's cooperation and plea on unrelated charges in another federal district court insufficient for actual conflict analysis). Petitioner argues that his case is analogous to *Mannhalt,* in which counsel representing a client charged with robbery and possession of stolen foods was accused by a prosecutorial witness (and accomplice) of receiving stolen goods. *Id.* at 578. In the instant case, Trial Counsel had been arrested previously by the same agency, but was not implicated personally in this case and was not facing charges or investigation during the Petitioner's criminal proceedings. (2AP, Ex. 7 at 2-6). Petitioner has not shown that Trial Counsel's prior crimes put his interest in direct conflict with Petitioner in this case. As Petitioner has failed to establish that either of these allegations rise to the level of an actual conflict, and he has failed to demonstrate prejudice, this claim must fail.

C. Failure to Present Evidence to Rebut Motive Theory.

Petitioner alleges that Trial Counsel erred by failing to present evidence to rebut the prosecution's motive theory. According to Petitioner, the prosecution argued that Petitioner resented his wife for removing him from the business checking account and feared losing his business to her in a divorce proceeding. (2AP at 51). He asserts that the only motive presented by the prosecution was Petitioner's alleged financial concerns. Petitioner further alleges that but for Trial Counsel's failure to rebut the motive theory Petitioner would not have been convicted.

Petitioner contends that this motive could have and should have been rebutted with evidence of his separate property assets. Petitioner alleges that Trial Counsel could have easily done away with any financial motive through Petitioner's accountant, who testified as a character witness, and who could have also testified that Petitioner's separate property was significantly larger than his stake in the community property and thus there was no financial incentive for him to kill his wife.[13] Petitioner argues that if this evidence had been presented, the prosecution's motive theory would have been destroyed. Petitioner points out several witnesses who testified that in December 1992, Petitioner and Susan appeared happily reconciled and looking forward to the birth of their second child. (2AP at 52).

Petitioner's prejudice argument rests on the fact that the California Appellate Court determined that the motive theory was the "lynch pin" of the prosecution's case as to determining that premeditation and deliberation for first degree murder existed. (2AP at 57). Petitioner states that he told Counsel about his accountant. Thus, it was Counsel's failure to investigate or tactical decision not to present this evidence that must be evaluated as reasonable or unreasonable. (2AP at 55).

Assuming, without deciding, that Trial Counsel's failure to put on this evidence was outside the wide scope of reasonable and competent representation, the Court

[13] The Court notes Carl Campbell, Petitioner's CPA, did not provide any representation as to the net worth of petitioner's separate property at the time of Susan's death. *See* 2AP, Ex. 4 (Campbell Decl.).

turns to prejudice. Review of the trial transcript reveals that financial incentive was only a portion of the motive presented by the prosecution. The prosecution's case also presented the theory that it was not just losing the money and the business but losing the money and business *again*. The prosecution established through questioning, and Petitioner's fourth step diary documents, that Petitioner's first wife sold his business and divorced him while he was incarcerated for his second felony offense. (R.T. at 787, 788, 892; Fourth Step Diary at 5-6, 7). The prosecution's theory could reasonably be interpreted by the jury as calling into question Petitioner's ability to handle another failure, the loss of his business a second time to a wife who could no longer put up with his drug addiction.

There was also more at stake than just the business. There was the possibility that the Petitioner would lose custody of his son. Thus, even if Trial Counsel had presented evidence of Petitioner's alleged financial independence, the jury could still find the prosecution's motive theory credible. As Petitioner has failed to show prejudice, this claim must fail.

D. Failure to Present Evidence of Victim's State of Mind through Introduction of Her "Step Work" Diary.

Petitioner alleges that Trial Counsel erred in failing to introduce Susan's "Step Diary" as evidence of her state of mind, which would corroborate his version of the physical encounter which led to Susan's death.

Petitioner testified at trial that Susan found his "Fourth step" paperwork in which he admitted to sleeping with prostitutes when he was using drugs. (R.T. at 699, 701). Petitioner stated that upon reading these confessions

Susan became very upset and wanted to talk with him. (R.T. at 701-02). Petitioner refused to discuss it with her the night she found the papers. (R.T. at 705). Petitioner stated that the next day Susan was still very upset, she followed him to the garage and wanted to talk with him, and Petitioner again refused. (R.T. at 708). Back inside the house Susan said "I don't have time for you." (R.T. at 712-13). Petitioner thought she was speaking to their son and told her not to take her anger out on the child. (R.T. at 713). Susan then told Petitioner he was "scum". (R.T. at 714). Petitioner testified that this comment sparked a physical confrontation, initiated by Susan. (R.T. at 715). Petitioner stated that Susan was so violent and angry that he was forced to try and restrain her by holding her against the wall with a computer cable, which resulted in her death by strangulation. (R.T. at 722-744).

Petitioner argues that to corroborate his testimony Trial Counsel should have offered Susan's "Step Diary" which she was completing for her work in Al-Anon. Petitioner characterizes this "Step Diary" as verifying that Susan was "primed to go nova" on him if she found out that he had had intercourse with another woman. (2AP at 65).

Initially, Petitioner fails to address whether this "Diary" would even be admissible. First, it is a hearsay document. It would only be admissible under the state of mind exception if it was relevant in time to the events which took place on January 4, 1993. Cal. Evid. Code § 1250 (a); *People v. Karis*, 46 Cal. 3d 612, 637 (1988) (holding state of mind evidence admissible unless the circumstances in which the statements were made, the lapse of time, or other evidence suggests that the state of mind was transitory and no longer existed at the time of

the charged offense). This document is dated November 6, 1991, and October 3, 1992. This is a year to three months prior to the event in question, and therefore not likely to be deemed relevant in time. Trial Counsel's failure to make a futile motion does not constitute behavior outside the scope of competency. *James v. Borg,* 24 F.3d 20, 26 (9th Cir. 1994).

Petitioner has also failed to demonstrate that Trial Counsel's decision not to introduce this document into evidence does not fall within the wide range of competent and reasonable performance. As Petitioner admitted, read in its entirety this document creates a picture of Susan as a woman who was disappointed and disillusioned by the reality of her marriage. Far from evidencing that she was a powder keg of "repressed rage," it shows that she also took responsibility for the problems in her marriage. Additionally, Trial Counsel may have chosen not to introduce this document as there were damaging statements about Petitioner. For example, Susan wrote: "I felt afraid that I had to make love to him after he came home . . . because of the way he would act – mad, hostile, aggressive, accusatory." (Susan's Step Diary at 3). Contrary to character witness testimony at trial, this statement suggests that Petitioner may have had a history of violence or aggression towards his wife. Susan had also written: "[I] just pretend that if he tells me he hasn't slept with anyone and that he used new needles that it will be O.K." (Susan's Step Diary at 4). This suggests that she didn't believe Petitioner when he told her that he had never had intercourse with other women.

Petitioner contends that these statements could have been suppressed as inadmissible hearsay; however, under California Evidence Code § 356, if a portion of a writing is

introduced, the opposing party may introduce any other relevant part. Therefore, Trial Counsel could not introduce any potentially corroborative portions of Susan's "Step Diary" without opening the door to the more damaging remainder. Thus, his decision not to introduce this document falls within the range of reasonable and competent representation.

Petitioner has also failed to establish how not introducing this document creates prejudice. Petitioner states in his argument that Trial Counsel's attempts to show Susan's propensity for anger through examination of her family were not successful, leaving only the testimony of Petitioner's step-father and himself. Petitioner points to some passages in Susan's "Step Diary" that he alleges show this pent up rage, and concludes that failure to introduce this evidence is prejudice. (2AP at 66). Petitioner states that a key fact going to the need for this corroborative evidence is that the prosecution did not question Susan's finding of the "Fourth step" paperwork but rather her reaction to it. The prosecution questioned why Susan didn't react with violence immediately upon finding the document. Admission of her diary does not answer this question.

Even if the jury believed every word of Petitioner's testimony regarding his wife's anger, they could still have found him guilty of first degree murder. It was Petitioner's actions in the face of Susan's anger that led to his conviction, not the actions of his wife. In the circumstances as described by Petitioner, there appears to be no reason for him not to have left the house. He testified that he was being hit and kicked; he also said that it didn't really hurt. (R.T. at 719, 722). He stated that he was not in fear for his life, but rather he was just trying to control his wife. (R.T.

at 746, 784-85). The jury could reasonably have found that holding a computer cord around someone's head or neck is highly likely to lead to strangulation and death. Additionally, the jury could still have determined that during the struggle Petitioner had the opportunity consciously to choose between walking or running away from the house and his upset wife or killing her.[14] They could reasonably have found that Petitioner's actions following the murder were evidence of his consciousness of guilt. Finally, they could have found that Petitioner, based on his lies to family, friends, and police officers, was not a credible witness and therefore did not believe that this was an accident.

As the decision not to introduce this document is within the wide range of competent behavior and there was no prejudice to the defense by failing to introduce it, this claim must fail.

E. Failure to Search Wallet Resulting in Consideration by Jury of Extrinsic Evidence.

Petitioner alleges extrinsic evidence, a receipt for an AIDS/HIV blood test inside Susan's wallet, was allowed to reach the jury, resulting in violations of his Fifth Amendment right to due process and his Sixth Amendment right to effective assistance of counsel. Apparently, neither Petitioner, Trial Counsel, nor the prosecution knew of the HIV blood test receipt when the wallet was given to the jury. Petitioner argues that finding this receipt led the jury

[14] Petitioner testified that during the struggle he could have gone out the front door but chose not to. (R.T. at 797)

to believe that Susan knew of his infidelity prior to finding his fourth step paperwork. Petitioner contends that allowing this blood test receipt to reach the jury destroyed his credibility, and that but for this receipt the jury would have found his testimony credible and found him not guilty of first degree murder. To support his argument, Petitioner points to the length of jury deliberations and their request to have his testimony read back in its entirety, arguing these elements suggest that the decision was a very close one. Petitioner argues that his credibility was the determinative factor. (2AP at 73).

Susan's wallet was found in the southeast bedroom of Petitioner's home. (R.T. at 296). The significance of the wallet lies in the fact that it was missing (along with a computer printer) from MacSource the night of her disappearance, suggesting foul play. (R.T. at 45). When the police searched defendant's home, they found the missing wallet. (R.T. at 296).

Petitioner presents this court with the declarations of two jurors regarding the presence of the receipt in the jury room and its effect on their deliberations. The admissibility of post-verdict juror testimony is controlled by Federal Rule of Evidence 606(b): "[A] juror may not testify as to . . . the effect of anything upon that or any other juror's mind or emotions as influencing the juror to assent to or dissent from the verdict . . . or concerning the juror's mental processes in connection therewith. . . . " This rule applies to petitions for writ of habeas corpus from state court prisoners. *See* Fed. R. Evid. 1101(e).

Jurors may not impeach their own verdict. *Tanner v. United States,* 483 U.S. 107, 117-127 (1987); *Hard v. Burlington N. R.R.,* 870 F.2d 1454, 1460-1461 (9th Cir.

1989). Accordingly, "evidence concerning a jury's deliberations or a juror's reasoning is inadmissible to impeach a verdict." *United States v. Rohrer*, 708 F.2d 429, 434 (9th Cir. 1983) (finding affidavits regarding jurors' individual or collective thought processes inadmissible under Rule 606(b)). Moreover, jurors "may not be questioned about the deliberative process . . . nor can such information be considered by the trial or appellate courts." *United States v. Bagnariol,* 665 F.2d 877, 884-85 (9th Cir. 1981). Thus, any juror declaration offered by Petitioner to demonstrate the effect that the receipt had on their determination of guilt or innocence may not be considered as evidence by this Court. These declarations may only be considered for the purpose of establishing that the receipt was in fact found by the jury.

Petitioner first argues, by analogy to *Eslaminia v. White,* 136 F.3d 1234 (9th Cir. 1998), that the admission of this HIV/AIDS receipt is extrinsic evidence. Consideration of evidence not admitted at trial violates the petitioner's rights to confrontation, cross-examination, and effective assistance of counsel. *Id.* at 1237. In habeas corpus review, the harmless error standard applies to the use of such evidence by the jury. "[A]n error requires reversal only if it had substantial and injurious effect or influence in determining the jury's verdict." *Id.* (*citing Brecht v. Abrahamson,* 507 U.S. 619, 631 (1993)).

Petitioner contends that consideration of this document had a substantial influence on the jury's determination of the verdict. Petitioner's entire defense rested on the fact that Susan's death was the result of a physical confrontation sparked by her discovery of his infidelities. Petitioner points out that twice he testified that Susan did not know about his infidelities before the night she found

the fourth step notes. (2AP at 71). He also notes that if the jury found his testimony credible, no witness for the prosecution could contradict his story. (2AP at 72). Therefore, he concludes, the jury must have interpreted his receipt to mean that Susan knew of petitioner's infidelities, and that destroyed his credibility which led them to convict.

What Petitioner fails to acknowledge is that he had told his wife he was an intravenous drug user. The simplest explanation for the blood test was that Susan sought the test because of his behavior. The jury therefore did not need to infer that she knew of his contact with prostitutes. Alternatively, Petitioner testified that while Susan knew most of what was in his fourth step diary, she just didn't know the specifics. (R.T. at 793). The jury could therefore have determined that based on her suspicions she decided to get tested. This would have been consistent with the evidence that Petitioner presented at trial. Thus, exposure of the jury to this extrinsic evidence did not necessarily incriminate Petitioner or unduly influence their determination of guilt or innocence.

As discussed previously, even if the jury believed Petitioner's testimony that he was only responding in kind to his wife's rage, the jury could still have found him guilty. *See* discussion Claim D *supra.* Therefore, consideration of this evidence would have been harmless error and this claim must fail.

Regarding Petitioner's claim of ineffective assistance of counsel for failure to search the wallet, this claim must also fail. Petitioner claims that but for counsel's failure to search the wallet the HIV/AIDS receipt would never have reached the jury, and the outcome of the trial would have

been different. Assuming, without deciding, that Trial Counsel did err by not inventorying the wallet before allowing it to be admitted into evidence, for the foregoing reasons Petitioner cannot show prejudice.

F. Failure to Request California Jury Instruction 8.73 on the Relation of Provocation to the Degree of Murder.

Petitioner alleges ineffective assistance of counsel for failure to request CALJIC No. 8.73, regarding evidence of provocation on the question of first or second degree murder.

CALJIC No. 8.73 states:

> If the evidence establishes that there was provocation which played a part in inducing an unlawful killing of a human being, but the provocation was not sufficient to reduce the homicide to manslaughter, you should consider the provocation for the bearing it may have on whether the defendant killed with or without deliberation and premeditation.

The basis of Petitioner's defense was that his wife initiated a physical confrontation which resulted in her accidental death, that he was provoked into killing her. Petitioner claims Trial Counsel's failure to request this jury instruction resulted in the jury using the evidence of provocation only for the purpose of determining whether it was murder or manslaughter.

Where the record shows that counsel deliberately chose not to request a specific instruction, and the record shows that the omission was reasonable, ineffective assistance of counsel will not be found. *Butcher v. Marquez,* 758 F.2d 373, 377 (9th Cir. 1985). In the instant

case, the record indicates that both counsels and the trial judge went over the instructions. (R.T. at 888-89). They covered sequentially CALJIC Nos. 8.70, 8.71, 8.72, and 8.74. *Id.* This tends to suggest that Trial Counsel examined CALJIC No. 8.73 and chose not to use it. Additionally, Trial Counsel strategically chose an all or nothing approach in regard to sentencing. Had Petitioner been convicted of second degree murder he would have faced a possible sentence of fifteen (15) years-to-life, under Penal Code § 190 with no guarantee of parole given the facts of this case. As the California Appellate Court found, Trial Counsel's decision not to ask for this instruction so as to focus the jury on manslaughter was reasonable. Petitioner has failed to show Trial Counsel's failure to request this instruction falls outside the wide range of reasonable and competent representation and therefore must fail.

II. Violation of Due Process through Failure of the Trial Court to give CALJIC No. 8.73

Petitioner claims that the trial court violated his Fifth Amendment right to due process by failing to give, sua sponte, CALJIC No. 8.73.[15]

Initially, the Court notes that the state appellate court found that the trial court erred by failing to give CALJIC No. 8.73, but found that it was harmless error. Indeed, Petitioner's argument appears to be supported by the California Supreme Court's decision in *People v. Johnson,*

[15] Respondent contends that this claim has not been exhausted in state court. However, this Court may deny the petition notwithstanding the failure to exhaust. 28 U.S.C. § 2254(b)(2).

6 Cal. 4th 1, 42-43 (1993) (approving sua sponte instruction on provocation as to mitigating deliberation element of mens rea for first degree murder). However, the California Supreme Court's decision in *People v. Saille,* holding that there no sua sponte duty to give pinpoint instructions as opposed to special defenses, calls *Johnson* into question. 54 Cal. 3d 1103, 1117 (1991). Where the defendant relates certain evidence to an element of the crime and attempts to raise a reasonable doubt as to that element (in *Saille* the evidence was voluntary intoxication), it is offered as a defense to an element of the crime and not as a defense to the crime itself, therefore it is a pinpoint instruction. *Id.* At least two California appellate courts have held that provocation is merely a defense to the element of premeditation and/or deliberation and therefore is a pinpoint instruction that must be requested. *People v. Lee,* 28 Cal. App. 4th 1724, 1734 (1994); *People v. Middleton,* 52 Cal. App. 4th 19, 32-33 (1997). This discrepancy in state law indicates that, as Respondent points out, this claim may not even rise to the level of a constitutional violation. *Middleton v. Cupp,* 768 F.2d 1083, 1085 (9th Cir. 1985) (holding federal habeas relief is "unavailable for alleged error in the interpretation or application of state law").

A federal court may overturn a state conviction resulting from an error in instructing the jury only if the instructional error "so infected the entire trial that the resulting conviction violates due process." *Henderson v. Kibbe,* 431 U.S. 145, 154 (1977); *Cupp v. Naughten,* 414 U.S. 141, 146 (1973); *Jeffries v. Bladgett,* 5 F.3d 1180, 1195 (9th Cir. 1993). Challenged jury instructions must be considered in the context of the jury instructions taken as a whole and the trial record. *Estelle v. McGuire,* 502 U.S. 62, 72 (1991); *Prantil v. California,* 843 F.2d 314, 317 (9th

Cir. 1988). The showing of a due process violation for jury instruction error is much higher on collateral review than on direct review. *Henderson,* 431 U.S. at 154.

The trial court's error in omitting a jury instruction is less likely to be prejudicial than the trial court's misstatement of the law. *Henderson,* 431 U.S. at 155; *see also Villafuerte v. Stewart,* 111 F.3d 616, 624 (9th Cir. 1997) (habeas petitioner whose claim involves a failure to give a particular instruction bears an especially heavy burden). To determine if the trial court's failure to give a jury instruction violated due process, the court must look at the context of the entire trial and overall charge to the jury. *Estelle,* 502 U.S. at 71-72; *Cupp v. Naughten,* 414 U.S. 141, 147 (1973).

A criminal defendant is entitled to adequate instructions on his or her theory of defense. *United States v. Kenny,* 645 F.2d 1323, 1337 (9th Cir.) (reh'g and reh'g en banc denied, appeal amended) (1981) ("jury must be instructed as to the defense theory of the case"). In this case the jury was instructed on the defense of provocation as relates to manslaughter. The record reveals that the Trial Counsel opted for an all-or-nothing defense strategy, failing, whether of neglect or plan, to request CALJIC No. 8.73. They were instructed that: "To establish that a killing is murder and not manslaughter, the burden is on the People to prove beyond a reasonable doubt each of the elements of murder and that act which caused the death was not done in the heat of passion or upon a sudden quarrel. . . . " However, the jury was instructed on the elements of first degree and second degree murder as well as manslaughter. Further, they were instructed that if they were not convinced beyond a reasonable doubt as to whether the Petitioner's actions constituted first or second

degree murder, they must give the benefit of the doubt to Petitioner and find second degree murder. (R.T. at 971). These instructions properly place the burden of proof on the prosecution, and they instructed the jury as to the defense theory of the case. There was no fundamental unfairness in the trial court's failure to instruct the jury that they may consider evidence of provocation as a defense to premeditation or deliberation under these circumstances. As such, this claim must be denied.

III. Insufficient Evidence to Support a Conviction of First Degree Murder.

Petitioner alleges that the trial record, the statements of witnesses and the exhibits are insufficient to prove as a matter of law premeditation or malice aforethought beyond a reasonable doubt. To determine whether a conviction violates the Constitution because of insufficient evidence, a federal court on writ of habeas corpus must determine whether "any rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt." *Jackson v. Virginia,* 443 U.S. 307, 319 (1979); *Jones v. Wood*, 114 F.3d 1002, 1008 (9th Cir. 1997); *Payne v. Borg,* 982 F.2d 335, 338 (9th Cir. 1993) (en banc). All evidence must be considered in the light that is the most favorable to the prosecution. *Jackson,* 443 U.S. at 319; *Jones,* 114 F.3d at 1108. The trier of fact's responsibility to resolve conflicting testimony, weigh evidence, and draw reasonable inferences from the facts. *Id.* The Court must base its determination of sufficiency of the evidence from an independent review of the record. *Jones,* 982 F.2d at 338.

The California Supreme Court has stated that evidence concerning motive, planning, and the manner of

killing are pertinent to the determination of premeditation and deliberation, but these factors are not exclusive nor are they invariably determinative. *People v. Perez,* 2 Cal. 4th 1117, 1125-1126 (1992). "Premeditation can occur in a brief period of time. The true test is not the duration of time as much as it is the extent of the reflection. Thoughts may follow each other with great rapidity and cold, calculated judgment may be arrived at quickly." *Perez,* 2 Cal. 4th at 1127.

In this case, there was sufficient evidence by which a reasonable juror could have concluded that petitioner's intent to kill Susan was premeditated and deliberated. Petitioner's own testimony provides sufficient evidence for the jury to find deliberation and premeditation. Petitioner testified that he put the computer cable around her head. (R.T. at 732). He testified that the cord moved down to her neck. (R.T. at 734). Counsel asked him what he did when the cord got around her neck, and Petitioner replied: "I pulled on it." (R.T. at 735). Trial Counsel asked if he intended to choke Susan, and Petitioner replied: "Enough to stop [her]." (R.T. at 735). After the cable was around her neck they struggled back and forth, Susan pushing him away from her. (R.T. at 737). Petitioner testified that he applied pressure to the cable and used it to push Susan against the wall. (R.T. at 740). Reviewing this testimony, the jury could determine that during the struggle Petitioner had the opportunity to consciously choose between

walking or running away from the house and his upset wife or killing her.[16]

Additionally, the jury could infer planning from the fact that Susan was killed during a time when all of the store employees were scheduled to be attending a conference out of town. She had been relegated to bed rest so her friends would not miss her. They could find that petitioner's wearing the computer cable around his neck, failing to deposit it in the computer room with the printer he was installing, was further evidence of planning. Finally, the prosecution provided the jury with a strong motive and the jury could reasonably have found that petitioner's actions following the murder were evidence of his consciousness of guilt.

Petitioner's disagreement with the jury's finding based on his own remembrances of the incident does not mean there was insufficient evidence to find premeditation and deliberation. It simply means the issue was factually disputed. The Court is bound by the factual determinations of the jury. *Jackson,* 443 U.S. at 319. Thus, there was sufficient evidence by which a reasonable jury could have concluded petitioner premeditated and deliberated to kill Susan Kurtz.

RECOMMENDATION

Accordingly, the Court RECOMMENDS that the petition for writ of habeas corpus be DENIED, and further

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[16] Petitioner testified that during the struggle he could have gone out the front door but chose not to. (R.T. at 1797)

RECOMMENDS any pending motions be DENIED as moot.[17]

This report and recommendation is submitted to the Honorable Anthony Ishii, United States District Court Judge, pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B) and Rule 72-304 of the Local Rules of Practice for the United States District Court, Eastern District of California. Within thirty (30) days after being served with a copy, any party may file written objections with the court and serve a copy on all parties. Such a document should be captioned "Objections to Magistrate Judge's Findings and Recommendations." Replies to the objections shall be served and filed within ten (10) *court* days (plus three days if served by mail) after service of the objections. The Court will then review the Magistrate Judge's ruling pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C). The parties are advised that failure to file objections within the specified time may waive the right to appeal the District Court's order. *Martinez v. Ylst,* 951 F.2d 1153 (9th Cir. 1991).

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED: 8/8/01

/s/ Sandra M. Snyder
SANDRA M. SNYDER
UNITED STATES
MAGISTRATE JUDGE

[17] Currently pending before this Court is Petitioner application and request for an evidentiary hearing as to grounds one through eight (1-8) of the second amended petition.

APPENDIX G

S078010

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF CALIFORNIA

IN RE ROBERT M. KURTZ

ON

HABEAS CORPUS

(Filed Jul 28, 1999)

Petition for writ of habeas corpus is DENIED. (*In re Clark* (1993) 5 Cal.4th 750; *In re Robbins* (1998) 18 Cal.4th 770, 780; *In re Waltreus* (1965) 62 Cal.2d 218, 225.)

/s/ George
Chief Justice

APPENDIX H

Fifth Appellate District No. F028036
S060748

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF CALIFORNIA

In Re ROBERT M. KURTZ On Habeas Corpus

(Filed Jun. 18, 1997)

Petition for review DENIED on the merits.

/s/ George
Chief Justice

APPENDIX I

Fifth Appellate District No. F020453
S047547

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF CALIFORNIA

THE PEOPLE, Respondent

v.

ROBERT M. KURTZ, Appellant

(Filed Aug. 30, 1995)

Appellant's petition for review DENIED.

/s/ Lucas
Chief Justice

APPENDIX J

NOT TO BE PUBLISHED IN OFFICIAL REPORTS

IN THE COURT OF APPEAL OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FIFTH APPELLATE DISTRICT

THE PEOPLE, Plaintiff and Respondent, v. ROBERT M. KURTZ, Defendant and Appellant.	F020453 (Super. Ct. No. 480916-6) OPINION (Filed May 31, 1995)

APPEAL from a judgment of the Superior Court of Fresno County. Gary Ray Kerkorian, Judge.

Cliff Gardner, under appointment by the Court of Appeal, and Robert M. Kurtz, in pro. per., for Defendant and Appellant.

Daniel E. Lungren, Attorney General, George Williamson, Chief Assistant Attorney General, Robert R. Anderson, Assistant Attorney General, Edgar A. Kerry and Robert P. Whitlock, Deputy Attorneys General, for Plaintiff and Respondent.

Defendant Robert M. Kurtz was convicted by jury of the first degree murder of his wife Susan. Defendant appeals, claiming the evidence is insufficient to support a first degree murder conviction, the failure to instruct on provocation as it related to second degree murder was prejudicial, trial counsel was ineffective in failing to request a provocation instruction, the trial court erred in

excluding testimony concerning defendant's propensity or lack thereof for violence, and the trial court erred when it ordered the doors of the courtroom to be locked during closing argument. We affirm.

FACTS

Defendant and Susan Kurtz owned a computer store, MacSource, in Fresno. They had a two-year-old son. Although defendant and Susan had a successful business and were very active in their church, they had a troubled marriage due largely to defendant's alcohol and cocaine use. They separated from August to October of 1992. They reunited and Susan became pregnant with their second child. Because she was having a difficult pregnancy, it was determined in January of 1993 that she should do her work for their business from their home.

On Sunday, January 3, 1993, defendant and Dale Shimono, an employee at MacSource, worked together at MacSource to set up a program so Susan could work from home. Dale talked to Susan on the phone while he was setting up the program.

That evening defendant attended an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meeting. His sponsor, Reed Harris, did not notice anything unusual about defendant's behavior that evening. As part of the AA program, members are required to work through a 12-step program. The fourth step is a personal inventory of their lives. It includes a list of the wrongs they committed and the people they resented.

Defendant did not appear at the business on Monday, January 4, as expected. On Tuesday, January 5, Dale

Shimono talked to defendant on the telephone. He told Dale that Susan had found his "fourth step" and things were "fucked up." Defendant showed up at work that afternoon. He was limping and had a bandage on his left hand. On Tuesday evening, defendant went to the AA meeting. Harris noted that defendant was agitated that evening. Defendant revealed to Harris that Susan had found his fourth step notes.

Between Monday, January 3, 1993, and Thursday, January 7, 1993, several friends and family members attempted to contact Susan by telephone. They either received the answering machine or defendant spoke to them and said Susan was resting or in the shower. Susan did not return the calls. Susan normally returned telephone calls within a relatively short period of time.

Close to midnight on Thursday, January 7, defendant called his stepfather, Jerry Hamilton. Defendant told Jerry he was worried because Susan had left around 9:30 to go to the store and had not returned. Defendant asked Jerry to look for her. Jerry first drove to the Von's grocery store and, when he did not see Susan's car in the parking lot, he drove to MacSource.

At MacSource, Jerry found Susan's car parked in front of the store. The front door of the store was ajar and there were keys in the interior side of the door. There were no lights on in the front of the store. Jerry called defendant from his car phone and told him to come to the store.

Defendant called Susan's father, George Marsh, and asked him to come and take care of the son. Defendant was concerned that Susan had not come home. When George arrived at defendant and Susan's home, defendant was gone; the son was in his room. The house was cold.

When George did not hear from defendant, he called his wife to watch the child so he could go to MacSource.

Police officer David Scroggins arrived at MacSource. He spoke to defendant and Jerry. Defendant told Officer Scroggins that Susan had left at 9:30 p.m. and when she failed to return by 11:30 p.m. he became concerned, causing him to telephone Jerry to request his assistance.

Officer Scroggins found Susan's car in front of the store with the keys in the ignition. The front door to MacSource was unlocked. Susan's coat was in a chair at her desk. A 2 x 4 used to secure the back door was gone. Seventy-five dollars and a printer were missing from the store. Scroggins filed a missing person report.

During the next several days, a great deal of publicity was generated in an attempt to find Susan. These efforts were unsuccessful. Defendant's father flew in from out of town to aid in the search. He offered to stay at defendant's home, but defendant insisted that he stay somewhere else. Defendant and Robbie stayed at the home of defendant's mother and Jerry.

On Monday, January 11, 1993, defendant went out to dinner with his mother and Jerry. During dinner, defendant told them Susan was dead. Defendant claimed Susan committed suicide in the garage. Defendant arranged to turn himself in to his attorney the following morning.

Late that evening, defendant contacted his AA sponsor, Reed Harris. Harris came and spoke to defendant. Defendant told Harris that Susan was upset when she found his fourth step. Defendant left, and when he returned, he found Susan dead and he believed she committed suicide. Defendant was confused as to why he did not

call the police; he did comment that he feared he would be a disgrace to the church.

Detective Schiotis was assigned to the Kurtz case. After investigating the case, Schiotis told defendant he thought he was involved. Defendant denied any involvement. On Saturday, January 9, detective Schiotis noticed an injury to defendant's hand. It looked like teeth marks. On Tuesday, January 12, Schiotis executed a search warrant at defendant's home. Defendant arrived with Jerry during the search of his home in order to get a change of clothes. He was allowed to get the clothes and then he left and went to his attorney's office. During the execution of the search warrant, defendant's attorney phoned the house and told the officers where Susan's body could be found.

Susan's body was found in the home, on the closet floor of the southeast bedroom. A bed had been pushed up against the closet door and there were air fresheners in the room and in the closet. Susan's feet were bound with duct tape and her body was wrapped in several layers of plastic.

Susan was five feet six inches tall and weighed two hundred forty-two pounds at the time of the autopsy. The fetus she was carrying was eight to ten weeks old. It was Dr. Venu Gopal's opinion that Susan died from strangulation. He found evidence of both ligature and manual strangulation. Susan also had a black eye and injuries to her tongue. It was Dr. Gopal's strong opinion that the injuries were not consistent with Susan's hanging herself.

Because of defendant's cocaine use, Susan had removed defendant's name from the MacSource checking account. It bothered defendant that he was no longer on the account.

Dale Shimono testified that he and defendant discussed problems together. One day during their discussion, and during defendant and Susan's separation, defendant told Dale that it would be easier if Susan was dead and easier to kill her and dump her in a field.

Defense

Defendant testified at trial. He explained that his fourth step included notes about the women he had been with sexually. He wrote about being unfaithful to Susan. He listed people he resented, and Susan was number one on the list. Susan had previously questioned him about being unfaithful and he always denied any infidelities. Susan was concerned that defendant was unfaithful to her because she was overweight. Defendant admitted he had been dishonest with police, lawyers and many others. He then came forth with his story of Susan's death.

Defendant arrived home Sunday, January 3, at approximately 10:30 p.m. Susan was standing there holding the paper listing defendant's fourth step in her hand. Susan said to defendant, "You lied to me." Susan wanted to talk and wanted specifics about defendant's infidelities during their marriage. Defendant told Susan she had no business reading his fourth step and he was not going to respond. Defendant left and returned in about an hour. He slept alone in a spare bedroom that night.

Defendant awakened the next morning with the intention of setting up the computer for Susan to use for the business. Defendant went to the garage to retrieve computer equipment from the trunk of the car. Susan came out to the garage, again wanting to discuss defendant's fourth step. Defendant told Susan the garage was

not an appropriate place to discuss the matter. Susan went inside and defendant followed carrying computer equipment with him.

Defendant went down the hall and put the printer in the southeast bedroom. He had a cord to the printer draped around his neck. He heard Susan say, "I don't have time for you." Defendant came out of the bedroom when he heard this comment and thought it was directed toward him. When he realized Susan was speaking to their son, defendant told Susan not to take their problems out on the child.

Susan told defendant he was "scum." Defendant felt angry. Susan began hitting defendant with her hand This was out of character for Susan. Defendant pushed Susan back; he lost his balance and fell to the floor hitting his head.

Susan grabbed the cord defendant had draped around his neck with both of her hands. Defendant reached for the cord and, as Susan pulled on it, it caused defendant to get up from the floor. Susan continued to pull on the cord, defendant's hand was on the cord, and Susan bit it. Defendant took hold of the cord and put it around Susan's head above her eyes. Defendant and Susan continued to struggle. Defendant pulled Susan away because she was hitting and kicking him. The cord moved down around Susan's neck as the two were struggling. Defendant said, "Stop. Are you going to stop?" Defendant pulled on the cord in an attempt to stop Susan's actions. Defendant was having a difficult time controlling Susan because she was so heavy.[1]

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[1] On January 2, 1993, defendant weighed 155 pounds.

Defendant and Susan continued to struggle back and forth. Defendant and Susan were facing each other, and the cord was crossed in the front of Susan's neck. Defendant pushed Susan against the wall but was unable to hold her there continuously. Defendant wanted to get away but when he let go of the cable, things escalated. Defendant looked to the front door to see if it was unlocked so he could leave, but he could not determine if it was locked. The struggle continued. Susan's face became flushed; the struggle stopped. Susan fell to the floor. Defendant checked to see if Susan had a pulse; she was dead.

Defendant testified he was angry during the struggle. He did not want to do serious harm to Susan and merely wanted to control her so she could not harm him.

When defendant realized Susan was dead, he was confused. He moved Susan's body to the master bedroom. He placed her head on two pillows and put a blanket over her. He later put a sheet over her face because he could not stand to look at her. Defendant could not think straight and did not know what to do.

During the afternoon of Tuesday, January 5, while Robbie was at day care, defendant moved Susan's body to a closet in the hallway. Before moving the body, he taped her legs together. He pulled Susan's body down the hall and put her in the closet. It took defendant over an hour to move the body due to mental and physical stress.

On Thursday, January 7, defendant moved Susan's body to the closet in the southeast bedroom. Defendant placed Susan's body on the bed. He wrapped her in plastic several times to mask the odor of her decomposing body. It

took defendant two to three hours to do this. Defendant was scared and felt responsible for Susan's death.

On Thursday afternoon, defendant drove the van to MacSource with his son and parked it in the back. MacSource was closed because all of the employees had gone to a convention. They walked home. That night he drove Susan's car with his son and parked it in front of MacSource. They returned home in the van.

Defendant was examined by Dr. Phillip Hamm, a licensed psychologist. Defendant had no history of violence, and the results of the tests Dr. Hamm administered to defendant were consistent with a nonviolent history. Dr. Hamm opined that immediately after Susan's death defendant was suffering from a post traumatic stress disorder. He had an overwhelming guilt reaction and believed that no one would believe what really had happened.

Several witnesses testified that they knew defendant and that he did not have a reputation for violence. In addition, witnesses testified that it was not unusual for defendant to have a computer cord draped around his neck while he was working on computers.

Defendant did not remember making any statements to Dale Shimono about killing Susan. Dale Shimono did not come forth with the statement when he was initially interviewed, but revealed defendant's statement shortly before trial. Defendant testified that Dale Shimono owed MacSource $2,000 and was suspected of taking things from the store after defendant's arrest.

DISCUSSION

I.

Substantial Evidence

Defendant asserts the evidence is insufficient to support a first degree premeditated and deliberate murder conviction. Defendant sets forth in great detail the facts of the case arguing why these facts negate a finding of premeditation and deliberation. He concludes that the People's case was entirely circumstantial and the first degree murder finding was speculative, being the product of conjecture and surmise. Therefore, he contends, substantial evidence does not support his first degree murder conviction.

While defendant's version of what happened may fit in with the evidence presented at trial and support a finding of less than first degree premeditated and deliberate murder, if the jury determined that defendant's testimony was not credible, the People's version of first degree murder was also supported by the evidence. In light of the string of untruths told by the defendant, the jury could have found defendant to be without any credibility. This court is precluded from determining the credibility of the witnesses; that duty is within the exclusive province of the factfinder.

The case of *People* v. *Anderson* (1968) 70 Cal.2d 15 sets forth a formula which can be utilized in determining if a murder is a first degree murder.

The *Anderson* analysis states:

> "'[T]he type of evidence which this court has found sufficient to sustain a finding of premeditation and deliberation falls into three basic

> categories: (1) facts about how and what defendant did *prior* to the actual killing which show that the defendant was engaged in activity directed toward, and explicable as intended to result in, the killing – what may be characterized as "planning" activity; (2) facts about the defendant's *prior* relationship and/or conduct with the victim from which the jury could reasonably infer a "motive" to kill the victim, which inference of motive, together with facts of type (1) or (3), would in turn support an inference that the killing was the result of "a pre-existing reflection" and "careful thought and weighing of considerations" rather than "mere unconsidered or rash impulse hastily executed" [citation]; (3) facts about the nature of the killing from which the jury could infer that the *manner* of killing was so particular and exacting that the defendant must have intentionally killed according to a "preconceived design" to take his victim's life in a particular way for a "reason" which the jury can reasonably infer from facts of type (1) or (2).
>
> [¶] Analysis of the cases will show that this court sustains verdicts of first degree murder typically when there is evidence of all three types and otherwise requires at least extremely strong evidence of (1) or evidence of (2) in conjunction with either (1) or (3)'" (*People* v. *Thomas* (1992) 2 Cal.4th 489, 516-517, quoting *People* v. *Anderson, supra*, 70 Cal.2d at pp. 26-27.)

Although the *Anderson* analysis has been frequently applied, the California Supreme Court has in recent years clarified that *Anderson* has limited application.

> "Unreflective reliance on *Anderson* for a definition of premeditation is inappropriate. The *Anderson* analysis was intended as a framework

> to assist reviewing courts in assessing whether the evidence supports an inference that the killing resulted from preexisting reflection and weighing of considerations. It did not refashion the elements of first degree murder or alter the substantive law of murder in any way. [Citation.] *Anderson* identifies categories of evidence relevant to premeditation and deliberation that we 'typically' find sufficient to sustain convictions for first degree murder. (*People* v. *Anderson*, *supra*, 70 Cal.2d at p. 27.)" (*People* v. *Thomas*, *supra*, 2 Cal.4th at p. 517.)

"[T]he appellate court does not substitute its judgment for that of the jury but affirms the verdict if a rational trier of fact could find premeditation and deliberation beyond a reasonable doubt." (*People* v. *Pride* (1992) 3 Cal.4th 195, 247.)

The present record contains some inferential evidence of planning, albeit not an overwhelming amount. The fact that defendant may have thought about killing Susan and disposing of her body can be inferred from his statement to Dale Shimono. Defendant armed himself with a computer cord. He attacked Susan in the isolation of their home. At the time of the killing, Susan was told by her doctor to get plenty of rest, so her absence in public places, where she would normally be, was easily explainable.

The evidence of motive was extremely strong. Defendant was addicted to drugs, and Susan had removed him from the business checking account, depriving him of this source of money. Defendant was angry about this. Susan had discovered defendant's fourth step notes. This discovery could have led to divorce, loss of the business, separation

from his son, and the exposure of defendant's past to the community.

Strangulation shows a deliberate intent to kill. (*People* v. *Rowland* (1982) 134 Cal.App.3d 1, 9.) Defendant strangled Susan in their home. Strangulation is a clean method of killing and would leave behind no tell-tale signs such as blood or other body materials. Thus, there would be no clue left in the home of a killing. In addition, there was evidence that Susan was strangled both manually and by ligature. "While ligature strangulation may not always evidence a premeditated murder [citation], the jury could have viewed the strangulation as a deliberate manner of killing sufficient to indicate a 'preconceived design'" (*People* v. *Lucero* (1988) 44 Cal.3d 1006, 1020; see also *People* v. *Proctor* (1992) 4 Cal.4th 499, 529-530.)

"In arriving at the intention of the defendant, regard should be given to what occurred at the time of the killing . . . as well as what was done before and after that time." (*People* v. *Eggers* (1947) 30 Cal.2d 676, 686.) Before the killing, defendant made comments to Dale Shimono that it would be easier if Susan were killed. After the killing, defendant encased Susan's body in plastic, hid her in the closet, and reported her missing. He put air fresheners in the room to mask the odor. From this it could be inferred that defendant planned to dispose of Susan's body at a later time and because she was reported missing it would be thought that she was the random victim of foul play at the hands of someone other than defendant.

All the above combines to provide substantial evidence to support defendant's first degree murder conviction.

II.

Provacation Instruction

The jury was instructed on murder. These instructions included first degree premeditated and deliberate murder, unpremeditated murder of the second degree, and second degree murder based on a killing resulting from an unlawful act dangerous to life. The jury was given manslaughter instructions including instructions on sudden quarrel or heat of passion and provocation sufficient to reduce a felonious homicide from murder to manslaughter. In addition, the jury was instructed on involuntary manslaughter, imperfect self-defense and self-defense.

The jury was not instructed with CALJIC No. 8.73, provocation sufficient to reduce a murder from first degree to second degree. Neither of the parties requested this instruction. CALJIC No. 8.73 (1992 revision) provides:

> "If the evidence establishes that there was provocation which played a part in inducing an unlawful killing of a human being, but the provocation was not sufficient to reduce the homicide to manslaughter, you should consider the provocation for such bearing as it may have on whether the defendant killed with or without deliberation and premeditation."

Defendant asserts the trial court had a sua sponte duty to give this instruction and the failure to do so was prejudicial error.

In *People* v. *Wickersham* (1982) 32 Cal.3d 307, the defendant was convicted of first degree murder of her husband. She testified that she and her husband scuffled over a gun and it went off. The trial court did not give any instructions on second degree murder or voluntary manslaughter.

Defendant asserted on appeal that the trial court erred in not instructing sua sponte on second degree murder. The Supreme Court agreed:

> "'[T]he existence of provocation which is not "adequate" to reduce the class of the offense [from murder to manslaughter] may nevertheless raise a reasonable doubt that the defendant formed the intent to kill upon, and carried it out after, deliberation and premeditation.' [Citations.]
>
> Thus, where the evidence of provocation would justify a jury determination that the accused had formed the intent to kill as a direct response to the provocation and had acted immediately, the trial court is required to give instructions on second degree murder under this theory. The fact that heated words were exchanged or a physical struggle took place between the victim and the accused before the fatality may be sufficient to raise a reasonable doubt in the minds of the jurors whether the accused planned the killing in advance.
>
> "In the present case, there was such evidence. The jury could have found that appellant did not form the intent to kill her husband until after he had mentioned the gun, come toward her, and tried to grab it from her. Even if the jury found that there was not sufficient provocation to warrant a lethal response and that appellant was not truly in fear for her life, the jury could have concluded that these activities affected her decision to kill Curt and that she had not premeditated or deliberated.
>
> "Indeed, an instruction on second degree murder would have been required even in the

> absence of appellant's testimony regarding Curt's behavior. Although the evidence was sufficient to justify a finding of deliberation and premeditation, such a finding was not compelled. The jury could have found that appellant did not premeditate but rather acted upon a 'sudden and unconsidered impulse[ ].' [Citation.] Hence, even if the jury rejected her testimony, that rejection did not require a conviction for first degree murder. Unlike certain felony-murder situations (see § 189), this is not a case in which appellant was either guilty of first degree murder or innocent of any charge." (*People* v. *Wickersham*, *supra,* 32 Cal.3d at pp. 329-330.)

The California Supreme Court has consistently held that the trial court is not obligated to give the provocation instruction when there is no evidence in the record tending to show the existence of provocation. (*People* v. *Rich* (1988) 45 Cal.3d 1036; *People* v. *Perez* (1992) 2 Cal.4th 1117.) In *People* v. *Johnson* (1993) 6 Cal.4th 1, the defendant asserted the trial court erred in failing to instruct sua sponte that provocation could be utilized in reducing a first degree murder to a second degree murder. The Supreme Court rejected defendant's argument because there was insufficient evidence of provocation to justify any instructions on that subject. In rejecting defendant's argument, the court stated:

> "As defendant observes, a *sua sponte instruction* on provocation and second degree murder must be given 'where the evidence of provocation would justify a jury determination that the accused had formed the intent to kill as a direct response to the provocation and had acted immediately' to carry it out. (*People* v. *Wickersham* (1992) 32 Cal.3d 307, 329. . . .) *Wickersham* noted that 'the fact that

> heated words were exchanged or a physical struggle took place between the victim and the accused before the fatality may be sufficient to raise a reasonable doubt' as to premeditation. (*Ibid.*)" *People* v. *Johnson*, *supra*, 6 Cal.4th at pp. 42-43, emphasis added.)

The People contend the trial court had no sua sponte duty to give the provocation instruction because the defense argued against any finding of malice. Therefore, the instruction was inconsistent with the defense theory of the case.

The main focus of defendant's argument was that he did not plan, premeditate or deliberate the killing of Susan. Defendant repeatedly questioned if there was evidence regarding premeditation and asked the jury to question it also. While defendant argued self-defense and voluntary manslaughter, he stated that the entire spectrum of homicide was in this case – "Everything from first degree murder to second degree murder, voluntary, involuntary and self-defense."

Although defendant testified he did not intend to kill Susan, the jury could have found there was not sufficient provocation to warrant a lethal response yet also have concluded there was provocation sufficient to affect defendant's decision to kill Susan but without premeditation and deliberation. Defendant's focus was an argument against premeditation. The provocation instruction was not inconsistent with defendant's defense.

Relying on *People* v. *Saille* (1991) 54 Cal.3d 1103, the People argue that there is no sua sponte duty to give CALJIC No. 8.73 because provocation is not a true defense but is proffered to raise a reasonable doubt as to the

existence of an element of the offense. As such, defendant is required to request a pinpoint instruction regarding the evidence, and the trial court need not instruct sua sponte.

In *People* v. *Saille*, *supra*, 54 Cal.3d at pp. 1103, the defendant asserted that "the trial court erred in failing to instruct sua sponte that the jury should consider his voluntary intoxication in determining whether he had premeditated and deliberated the murder." (*Id.* at p. 1117.) The Supreme Court first determined that in light of legislation abolishing diminished capacity, a murder could no longer be reduced to nonstatutory voluntary manslaughter due to voluntary intoxication. (*Id.* at p. 1107.) The Supreme Court traced the history of the defense of diminished capacity and found that this judicially created defense had been abolished by legislation. (*Id.* at pp. 1107-1114.)

The Supreme Court discussed that although intoxication was referred to as a defense,

> "Technically, however, it was never a defense (see § 22). When voluntary intoxication became subsumed by diminished capacity, it was treated as a part of the defense of diminished capacity. [Citations.] The withdrawal of diminished capacity as a defense removes intoxication from the realm of defenses to crimes. Intoxication is now relevant only to the extent that it bears on the question of whether the defendant actually had the requisite specific mental state. Thus it is now more like the 'pinpoint' instructions discussed in *People* v. *Sears* (1970) 2 Cal.3d 180, 190 . . . , and *People* v. *Rincon-Pineda* (1975) 14 Cal.3d 864, 885 . . . , to which a defendant is entitled upon request. Such instructions relate particular facts to a legal issue in the case or 'pinpoint' the crux

of a defendant's case, such as mistaken identification or alibi. [Citation.] They are required to be given upon request when there is evidence supportive of the theory, but they are not required to be given sua sponte." (*People* v. *Saille*, *supra*, 54 Cal.3d at p. 1119.)

The court concluded:

"[E]ven if there were a duty on the trial court to instruct sua sponte on voluntary intoxication when the defense of diminished capacity existed, we do not believe that it is reasonable for such a duty to continue after abolition of the diminished capacity defense.

"In our view, under the law relating to mental capacity as it exists today, it makes more sense to place on the defendant the duty to request an instruction which relates the evidence of his intoxication to an element of a crime, such as premeditation and deliberation. This is so because the defendant's evidence of intoxication can no longer be proffered as a defense to a crime but rather is proffered in an attempt to raise a doubt on an element of a crime which the prosecution must prove beyond a reasonable doubt. In such a case the defendant is attempting to relate his evidence of intoxication to an element of the crime. Accordingly, he may seek a 'pinpoint' instruction that must be requested by him [citation], but such a pinpoint instruction does not involve a 'general principle of law' as that term is used in the cases that have imposed a sua sponte duty of instruction on the trial court. The court did not err, therefore, in failing to instruct sua sponte." (*People* v. *Saille*, *supra*, 54 Cal.3d at p. 1120.)

The defendant in *People* v. *Lee* (1994) 28 Cal.App.4th 1724 was convicted of first degree murder. Defendant testified that he was in fear for his life and provoked. On appeal he asserted that "the trial court erred by failing to instruct the jury sua sponte that it could consider provocation by the victim in determining whether Lee acted with premeditation and deliberation." (*Id.* at 1732.) Lee relied on *People* v. *Johnson*, *supra*, 6 Cal.4th 1, *People* v. *Perez*, *supra*, 2 Cal.4th 1117, and *People* v. *Wickersham*, *supra*, 32 Cal.3d 307 to support his position. The appellate court rejected the defendant's argument, finding the sua sponte language in *Perez* and *Johnson* to be dicta and relying upon *Saille*.

> "Here, the instruction Lee argues for was not an instruction on a defense. Rather, it was an instruction that related certain evidence to an element of the crime and attempted to raise a reasonable doubt as to that element. Such an instruction is a pinpoint instruction under *Saille*, and as such, need not have been given sua sponte. (*People* v. *Saille*, *supra*, 54 Cal.3d at p. 1120.)" *People* v. *Lee*, *supra*, 28 Cal.App.4th at p. 1734.)[2]

Defendant argues that *People* v. *Saille* should not apply to CALJIC No. 8.73 because, unlike diminished capacity based on intoxication, provocation is still a defense to the crime of murder. Defendant points to Penal Code section 192, subdivision (a) in arguing that provocation is a defense to murder. Penal Code section 192,

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[2] Lee's petition for review in the California Supreme Court was denied.

subdivision (a) sets forth that the unlawful killing of a human being without malice is voluntary manslaughter if the killing was based upon a sudden quarrel or heat of passion. While Penal Code section 192 codifies provocation as a defense to reduce a murder to manslaughter, provocation to reduce a murder from first degree to second degree is not so codified.

In *People* v. *Valentine* (1946) 28 Cal.2d 121, the California Supreme Court recognized that provocation not adequate to reduce a murder to manslaughter may nevertheless raise a reasonable doubt that the defendant killed after deliberation and premeditation. (*Id.* at p. 132.) The error in *Valentine* was particularly egregious because the trial court additionally erred in instructing the jury that the burden of proving circumstances that would mitigate the degree of murder "devolves upon the defendant." (*Ibid.*)

Quoting the second degree murder provocation theory from *Valentine,* the *Wickersham* court stated that when there is evidence to support such a theory "the trial court is required to give instructions on second degree murder under this theory." (*People* v. *Wickersham*, *supra*, 32 Cal.3d at p. 329.) *Wickersham* does not make clear if the court is required merely to give a second degree murder instruction or is required to give a second degree murder instruction relating the theory of provocation to the absence of premeditation and deliberation. Although the language in the subsequent case of *Johnson*, which was filed after *Saille*, is dicta, it cites *People* v. *Wickersham* and states, "A sua sponte instruction on provocation *and* second degree murder" must be given where there is evidence to support such a theory. (*People* v. *Johnson*, *supra*, 6 Cal.4th at p. 42, emphasis added.)

Thus, provocation to reduce a first degree murder to a second degree murder has been treated by the Supreme Court as a separate defense, as that term is liberally used. This brings the discussion here full circle back to *Saille*. As recognized in *Saille*, a "defense" consisting of evidence which merely raises a reasonable doubt as to the existence of an element of an offense is not technically a true defense. The *Saille* court hinted that perhaps sua sponte instructions are not required in such a situation. The *Saille* court then stated, "Thus, even if there were a duty on the trial court to instruct sua sponte on voluntary intoxication when the defense of diminished capacity existed, we do not believe that it is reasonable for such a duty to continue after abolition of the diminished capacity defense." (*People* v. *Saille*, *supra*, 54 Cal.3d at p. 1120.) The *Saille* court commented that all the cases stating that a sua sponte duty existed to instruct on voluntary intoxication consisted entirely of dicta.

A critical distinction between *Saille* and the provocation defense here is that diminished capacity caused by voluntary intoxication was legislatively abolished. There has been no such abolition of the judicial recognition that provocation can be utilized to reduce first degree murder to second degree murder. Second degree murder provocation, like the manslaughter concepts of imperfect self-defense and heat of passion or sudden quarrel, is a doctrine judicially or legislatively created in recognition of human frailties and although specified behavior might be criminal, it is not as reprehensible as other crimes with the same result because there is some excuse that either the Legislature or the courts have recognized to mitigate the culpability of the actor. The People of the State of California and the Legislature determined that voluntary

intoxication should no longer be an excuse for such behavior and that defense, as previously recognized, was abolished.

The *Saille* opinion was thus founded on the abolition of the defense. Since there has been no such abolition of the provocation "defense" to reduce first degree murder to a second degree murder, we cannot say that *Saille* applies here. In light of *People* v. *Wickersham* as interpreted by *People* v. *Johnson,* until and unless the Supreme Court says otherwise, we must conclude that provocation to reduce a murder from first degree murder to second degree murder is a defense requiring sua sponte instructions when there is evidence supporting the theory. Therefore, it was error not to so instruct here.

The People contend that even if it was error to not instruct pursuant to CALJIC No. 8.73, any error was not prejudicial and defendant would not have obtained a more favorable result even had the instruction been given. The People point to the fact the jury was instructed on all the different types of homicide, and the jury carefully considered all the evidence; the jury heard defendant's testimony twice (having requested the court reporter read back his testimony), yet the jury convicted defendant of first degree murder.

Harmless error review applies where any issues which would have been posed by an omitted instruction were necessarily resolved against defendant under other, properly given instructions. (*People* v. *Sedeno* (1974) 10 Cal.3d 703, 721.) The *Watson* (*People* v. *Watson* (1956) 46 Cal.2d 818) standard applies here; we determine "whether it is reasonably probable that a result more favorable to defendant

would have been reached in absence of the error." (*People* v. *Murtishaw* (1981) 29 Cal.3d 733, 765.)

Here, the jury was instructed that in order to have first degree murder the intent to kill "must have been formed upon pre-existing reflection and not under a sudden heat of passion or other condition precluding the idea of deliberation." (CALJIC No. 8.20.) This instruction further stated that "a mere unconsidered and rash impulse, even though it include an intent to kill, is not such deliberation and premeditation as will fix an unlawful killing as murder of the first degree." CALJIC No. 8.30 was also read to the jury. It provides:

> "Murder of the second degree is the unlawful killing of a human being with malice aforethought when there is manifested an intention unlawfully to kill a human being but the evidence is insufficient to establish deliberation and premeditation."

As previously noted, defendant focused his argument on the lack of premeditation as a result of circumstances of provocation. While the defense case emphasized its claim that the killing was unintentional or, if intentional, committed without malice aforethought, making defendant culpable for, at most, manslaughter, the jury had the entire spectrum of homicide before it in deliberating and reaching its verdict. Critical to our evaluation of prejudice is the fact that all of the jury's alternatives to first degree murder were premised on defendant's claim he acted under the influence of provocation. The manslaughter instructions explained that the provocation sufficient to reduce murder to manslaughter on the ground of sudden quarrel or heat of passion had to be such that an ordinarily reasonable person in the same circumstances would

have acted from such passion rather than from judgment. (CALJIC No. 8.42.) The trial court's error here was in not specifically instructing the jury to consider the bearing provocation had on differentiating between the degrees of murder.

However, it is not reasonably probable that a result more favorable to defendant would have been reached had the trial court so instructed the jury in CALJIC No. 8.73. This is so because the jury could only find first degree murder on the instructions given if it was satisfied the clear, deliberate, premeditated intent of defendant to kill Susan "must have been formed upon pre-existing reflection and not under a sudden heat of passion or other condition precluding the idea of deliberation." (CALJIC No. 8.20.) In the context of this case, this instruction would cause the jury to determine whether defendant was so provoked by Susan that he acted under a sudden heat of passion or other condition preclusive of deliberation. Thus, the jury was told to evaluate whether "a sudden heat of passion or other condition" aroused in defendant precluded him from deliberating, which is synonymous on these facts with evaluating whether he was so *provoked* by Susan as to have not deliberated about the killing. Accordingly, the instructions given on distinguishing degrees of murder squarely placed the bearing of provocation before the jury without expressly saying "you should consider provocation" on this issue. The jury had sufficient instruction before it to allow it to determine that any provocation present here was neither sufficient to arouse a heat of passion by an objective test (to reduce defendant's culpability to manslaughter) nor by an essentially subjective test (to reduce defendant's culpability to second degree murder).

The situation concerning prejudice here is thus very different from the circumstances that arose in the previously cited *Valentine* and *Wickersham* cases. In *Valentine*, the trial court additionally erred in instructing that the defendant had the burden to mitigate the degree of murder. In *Wickersham,* the jury received no instruction whatsoever on second degree murder.

Because the jury in the present case necessarily resolved the provocation-arousing-heat-of-passion "defense" to first degree murder adversely to defendant under other, properly given instructions, we need only decide whether the jury could rationally find premeditation and deliberation beyond a reasonable doubt; if so, we may not substitute our judgment for that of the jury. (*People* v. *Pride*, *supra*, 3 Cal.4th at p. 247.) As already discussed in part I of this opinion, substantial evidence supported the verdict. We thus find the instructional error harmless.

III.

Ineffectiveness of Counsel

In a supplemental brief, defendant asserts his counsel was ineffective in failing to request CALJIC No. 8.73. Defendant contends there was substantial evidence to support the instruction, defense counsel's theory of the case revolved around provocation, and the trial court instructed the jury it could consider provocation in differentiating between murder and manslaughter.[3]

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[3] Although we have found the trial court had a sua sponte duty to give this instruction, we shall address this issue under the assumption that there was not a sua sponte duty.

> "To prevail on a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel on appeal, the defendant must show that there was no rational tactical purpose for counsel's act or omission, and that it is reasonably probable that, absent counsel's deficiencies, a more favorable result would have been obtained. (*Strickland* v. *Washington*, *supra*, 466 U.S. 668, 690, 694 . . .)" (*People* v. *Wader* (1993) 5 Cal.4th 610, 658.)

Defendant claimed throughout that he never intended to kill Susan. Defendant's testimony was supportive of the voluntary manslaughter conviction. On the record before this court it cannot be said that counsel had no rational and tactical purpose for not requesting the instruction. It is possible that defense counsel wished to focus the jury's attention fully on manslaughter. Because there could be a tactical reason why counsel did not request this instruction, counsel was not ineffective by failing to request it.

Even if it could said there was no rational and tactical purpose why the instruction was not requested, it is not reasonably probable that a more favorable result would have been obtained had the instruction been given, as is fully discussed in part II.

IV.

Exclusion of Opinion Testimony

Defendant called Dr. Phillip Hamm, a licensed psychologist, to testify on his behalf. Dr. Hamm examined defendant and gave him psychological tests while he was in jail. Defendant asked Dr. Hamm at trial if he formed an opinion as to whether or not he was prone to violence. Dr. Hamm replied that he had formed an opinion.

During a side bar conference, the People objected to Dr. Hamm's giving any opinion testimony on defendant's propensity for violence. The trial court ruled that the opinion testimony of Dr. Hamm on the subject was improper. The trial court ruled that Dr. Hamm could testify as to whether defendant had a history of violence and whether the tests revealed anything inconsistent with his history.

Dr. Hamm testified that defendant had no history of violence and his test results were consistent with his nonviolent history. Several witnesses who knew defendant testified they had no information that defendant acted violently nor had they ever seen him act violently. The people presented no evidence to suggest that defendant had a propensity toward violence.

Defendant contends the trial court committed prejudicial error in refusing to admit Dr. Hamm's opinion that defendant was not prone to violence. Defendant asserts that Dr. Hamm's proposed testimony could have led at least one juror to conclude the People had not proven a first degree murder beyond a reasonable doubt.

Assuming for the sake of argument that it was error to exclude the answer of Dr. Hamm to this one question, any error was not prejudicial. The jury was well aware of defendant's nonviolent character. The jury had a clear picture of Dr. Hamm's findings and the opinions of those who knew defendant to be nonviolent; Dr. Hamm's opinion, as such, would not have added anything of significance to the evidence presented at trial. No prejudice resulted from this omission.

V.

Locked Courtroom

Prior to the closing argument by the People and the defendant, the trial court made the following announcement:

> "THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen, before we start this morning, I do want to advise the spectators in the audience that we are going to have the door in the back locked. It's obvious we have a full courtroom, and no one else is going to come in, so if any of you feel that you may have to leave in the next hour or – or less, really, I am going to ask that you leave now because we don't want any distractions or don't feel it's proper either during argument or the giving of instructions.
>
> "After Mr. Kams argues, we will take a short break, five or so minutes, and then after Mr. Smith argues, we will take another break of a few minutes. And that – during those times, you will be allowed to leave if you feel you have to leave, but when we start again, the door will be closed. So I just want to tell you now what the procedure is we are going to be following."

Defendant contends the trial court violated his right to a public trial and procedural due process when it ordered the courtroom doors locked during closing arguments without prior hearing. Defendant recognizes that a recent California Supreme Court case, *People* v. *Woodward* (1992) 4 Cal.4th 376, is directly contrary to his argument. He makes the argument in any event in order to preserve the issue for federal review.

In *People* v. *Woodward*, *supra*, 4 Cal.4th 376, unbeknown to defendant or defense counsel, the trial court had

the courtroom doors locked during part of the prosecution's closing argument. A sign was posted on the door stating, " 'Trial in progress – Please do not enter.' " The sign listed the break times for the trial. During one of the afternoon recesses, a defense counsel noticed the sign and immediately moved for a mistrial. The trial court told defense counsel the sign was posted to avoid constant interruptions. At the defense request, the court took the sign down, the doors were unlocked, and closing arguments continued. (*Id.* at p. 380.) The Supreme Court held that public trial rights apply to closing arguments but found defendant was not denied a public trial. It found that in contrast to cases where the public is cleared from the courtroom for a significant period of time, defendant had a public trial and members of the public were present during closing arguments. The Supreme Court found that the trial court had substantial reasons to justify the temporary closure. The lack of notice, ruled the Supreme Court, does not establish denial of a public trial.

> "Thus, we conclude that although defendant was denied his due process right to prior notice of the closure of the courtroom, his public trial right was not thereby violated as well. For future cases, the better practice would be to announce to the parties and their counsel the court's tentative intention to close the courtroom to additional spectators, to explain the reasons therefor, and to permit them to object or offer suitable, less intrusive alternative measures." (*People* v. *Woodward*, *supra*, 4 Cal.4th at p. 386.)

In this case, the trial court announced it was going to close the courtroom and gave its reasons. The courtroom was full because of the great amount of publicity the case had received. The courtroom was not cleared of the spectators;

they were allowed to remain. Defendant did not object. In fact, it appears the disclosure was discussed by the parties previously. In its announcement, the court referred to the decision in terms of "we" – for example, "we don't want any distractions." From this it appeared that defendant had prior notice of the closure and at least had notice before it actually occurred. In any event, there is no indication that defendant was somehow precluded from objecting. Defendant was not denied his right to a public trial.

DISPOSITION

The judgment is affirmed.

/s/ Vartabedian
Vartabedian, Acting P. J.

WE CONCUR:

/s/ Thaxter
Thaxter, J.

/s/ Buckley
Buckley, J.

APPENDIX K

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

ROBERT MICHAEL KURTZ, Petitioner-Appellant, v. ROBERT L. AYERS, Warden, Respondent-Appellee.	No. 02-16843 D.C. No. CV-97-06201-AWI Eastern District California (Fresno) ORDER (Filed May 14, 2003)

Before: HUG and THOMAS, Circuit Judges.

The "Petition for Rehearing" and "Suggestion for Rehearing En Banc" received on April 1, 2003 are ordered filed and are denied. *See* 9th Cir. R. 27-10.

No motions for reconsideration, rehearing, clarification, stay of mandate, or any other submissions shall be filed or entertained in this closed docket.

APPENDIX L

Robert M. Kurtz
CDC No.: H94447
CSATF – State Prison
Facility E
P.O. Box 5242
Corcoran, CA 93212

Ju Propria Persona

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

ROBERT M. KURTZ, Petitioner,	)	No.: CV F 97-6201 AWI SMS P
v.	)	
J. W. FAIRMAN, JR., Warden of CSATF – State Prison and CAL TERHUNE, Director of California Department of Corrections. Respondents.	)	

PETITIONER'S SECOND, AMENDED
PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

(Filed Aug. 6, 1999)

PETITION UNDER 28 USC § 2254 FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS BY A PERSON IN STATE CUSTODY

United States District Court	**District** Eastern District of California	
Name Robert Michael Kurtz	**Prisoner No.** H94447	**Case No.**
Place of Confinement CSATF State Prison – Corcoran P.O. Box 5242, Facility "E" Corcoran, California 93212	CV F 97-6201 AWI SMS P	
Name of Petitioner (Include name under which convicted) ROBERT M. KURTZ	**Name of Respondent (authorized person having custody of petitioner)** J. W. FAIRMAN, JR., Warden of CSATF/SP and v. CAL TERHUNE, Director of California Department of Corrections	
The Attorney General of the State of: California		

PETITION

1. Name and location of court which entered the judgment of conviction under attack Fresno County Superior Court, County Courthouse, 1100 Van Ness, Fresno, CA 93717
2. Date of Judgment of conviction August 26, 1993
3. Length of sentence 25 years to life plus one year
4. Nature of offense involved (all counts) Penal code section 187 (murder) and Penal Code section 12022(b) (use of deadly weapon)
5. What was your plea? (Check one)
   (a) Not guilty ☒
   (b) Guilty ☐
   (c) Nolo Contendere ☐

If you entered a guilty plea to one count or indictment, and a not guilty plea to another count or indictment, give details:

6. If you pleaded not guilty, what kind of trial did you have? (Check one)
   (a) Jury ☒
   (b) Judge only ☐

7. Did you testify at trial?
   Yes ☒ No ☐

8. Did you appeal from the judgment of conviction?
   Yes ☒ No ☐

9. If you did appeal, answer the following:

   (a) Name of court California Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District

   (b) Result Judgment affirmed

   (c) Date of result and citation, if known May 31, 1995 (See appendix A.)

   (d) Grounds raised 1) Insufficient evidence; 2) Court's failure to give CALJIC 8.73; 3) Ineffective counsel; & 4) Locked courtroom.

   (e) If you sought further review of the decision on appeal by a higher state court, please answer the following:

      (1) Name of court California Supreme Court

      (2) Result Review denied

      (3) Date of result and citation, if known August 30, 1995 (See appendix B.)

      (4) Grounds raised Same as listed in 9(d) above.

(f) If you filed a petition for certiorari in the United States Supreme Court, please answer the following with respect to each direct appeal:

(1) Name of court Not applicable

(2) Result _____

_____

(3) Date of result and citation, if known_____

(4) Grounds raised _____

_____

10. Other than a direct appeal from the judgment of conviction and sentence, have you previously filed any petitions, applications, or motions with respect to this judgment in any court, state or federal?
Yes ☒ No ☐

11. If your answer to 10 was "yes," give the following information: (Habeas petition #1)

(a) (1) Name of court Fresno Sup. Ct./Ct. of Appeal 5th Dist./Supreme Ct.

(2) Nature of proceeding Habeas petition/ Habeas petition/Petition for review. (Listed respectively for each court above.)

(3) Grounds raised 1) Inadmissible hearsay evidence came before jury; 2) Counsel neglected to search wallet containing hearsay evidence; and 3) Counsel negligently failed to request CALJIC No. 8.73.

(4) Did you receive an evidentiary hearing on your petition, application or motion?
Yes ☐ No ☒

(5) Result Petition denied/Petition denied/ Review denied, respectively

(6) Date of result Mar. 14, 1997/Apr. 10, 1997/ Jun. 18, 1997. (See appendices C. D, E.)

(b) As to any second petition, application or motion give the same information: (Habeas petition #2)

(1) Name of court Fresno Sup. Ct./Ct. of Appeal 5th Dist./Supreme Ct.

(2) Nature of proceeding Habeas petition/Habeas petition/Habeas petition. (Listed respectively for each court above.)

(3) Grounds raised 1) 8 ineffective assistance of counsel claims related to counsel's failure to act to protect, and his multiple breaches of, petitioner's attorney-client privilege; and 2) 2 additional ineffective assistance of counsel claims unrelated to the attorney-client privilege.

(4) Did you receive an evidentiary hearing on your petition, application or motion?

Yes ☐ No ☒

(5) Result Petition denied/Petition denied/ Petition denied, respectively

(6) Date of result May 14, 1997/Jan. 29, 1999/ July 28, 1999. (See appendices F, G, & H.)

(c) Did you appeal to the highest state court having jurisdiction the result of action taken on any petition, application or motion?

(1) First petition, etc. Yes ☒ No ☐

(2) Second petition, etc. Yes ☒ No ☐

(d) If you did *not* appeal from the adverse action on any petition, application or motion, explain briefly why you did not:

Not applicable

12. State *concisely* every ground on which you claim that you are being held unlawfully. Summarize *briefly* the *facts* supporting each ground. If necessary, you may attach pages stating additional grounds and *facts* supporting same.

CAUTION: In order to proceed in the federal court, you must ordinarily first exhaust your available state court remedies as to each ground on which you request action by the federal court. If you fail to set forth all grounds in this petition, you may be barred from presenting additional grounds at a later date.

For your information, the following is a list of the most frequently raised grounds for relief in habeas corpus proceedings. Each statement preceded by a letter constitutes a separate ground for possible relief. You may raise any grounds which you may have other than those listed if you have exhausted your state court remedies with respect to them. However, *you should raise in this petition all available grounds* (relating to this conviction) on which you base your allegations that you are being held in custody unlawfully.

Do not check any of these listed grounds. If you select one or more of these grounds for relief you must allege facts. The petition will be returned to you if you merely check (a) through (j) or any one of these grounds.

(a) Conviction obtained by plea of guilty which was unlawfully induced or not made voluntarily with understanding of the nature of the charge and the consequences of the plea.

(b) Conviction obtained by use of coerced confession.

(c) Conviction obtained by use of evidence gained pursuant to an unconstitutional search and seizure.

(d) Conviction obtained by use of evidence obtained pursuant to an unlawful arrest.

(e) Conviction obtained by a violation of the privilege against self-incrimination.

(f) Conviction obtained by the unconstitutional failure of the prosecution to disclose to the defendant evidence favorable to the defendant.

(g) Conviction obtained by a violation of the protection against double jeopardy.

(h) Conviction obtained by action of a grand or petit jury which was unconstitutionally selected and impaneled.

(i) Denial of effective assistance of counsel.

(j) Denial of right of appeal.

A. Ground one: See accompanying "Ground 1" starting at page 8.

Supporting FACTS (state *briefly* without citing cases or law) See accompanying "Supporting Facts" starting at page 8.

B. Ground two: See accompanying "Ground 2" starting at page 10.

Supporting FACTS (state *briefly* without citing cases or law): See accompanying "Supporting Facts" starting at page 10.

C. Ground three: See accompanying "Ground 3" starting at page 12.

Supporting FACTS (state *briefly* without citing cases or law): See accompanying "Supporting Facts" starting at page 12.

D. Ground four: See accompanying grounds 4 through 10 starting at page 13.

Supporting FACTS (state *briefly* without citing cases or law): See accompanying supporting facts for respective grounds 4 through 10 starting at page 13.

13. If any of the grounds listed in 12A, B, C, and D were not previously presented in any other court, state or federal, state *briefly* what grounds were not so presented, and give your reasons for not presenting them: Not applicable. (All ten grounds named in number 12, above, were presented and exhausted at the state level. (See appendices A through H, attached.)

14. Do you have any petition or appeal now pending in any court, either state or federal, as to the judgment under attack?
Yes ☐ No ☒

15. Give the name and address, if known, of each attorney who represented you in the following stages of the judgment attacked herein:

(a) At preliminary hearing William A. Smith, 2115 Kern Street, Suite 260, Fresno, CA 93721 [Home: 1010 S. Stanford, 93727] (Last known addresses)

(b) At arraignment and plea Same as in number 15(a) above.

(c) At trial Same as in number 15(a) above.

(d) At sentencing Same as in number 15(a) above.

(e) On Appeal Clifford Gardner, Gardner & Derham, Cocoa Building, Suite 220, 900 North Point, San Francisco, CA 94109

(f) In any post-conviction proceeding Petitioner acted in propria persona.

(g) On appeal from any adverse ruling in a post-conviction proceeding Petitioner acted in propria persona.

16. Were you sentenced on more than one count of an indictment, or on more than one indictment, in the same court and at the same time?
Yes ☐ No ☒

17. Do you have any future sentence to serve after you complete the sentence imposed by the judgment under attack?
Yes ☐ No ☒

(a) If so, give name and location of court which imposed sentence to be served in the future: ___

_____

(b) Give date and length of the above sentence: ___

_____

(c) Have you filed, or do you contemplate filing, any petition attacking the judgment which imposed the sentence to be served in the future?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Wherefore, petitioner prays that the Court grant petitioner relief to which he may be entitled in this proceeding.

/s/ Robert M. Kurtz
Signature of ~~Attorney (If any)~~ Petitioner

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on

August 3, 1999
(date)

/s/ Robert M. Kurtz
Signature of Petitioner

GROUND 1: PREJUDICIAL VIOLATION OF PETITIONER'S RIGHT TO EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE OF COUNSEL UNDER THE SIXTH AND FOURTEENTH AMENDMENTS AND HIS RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS (FIFTH AMENDMENT) DUE TO TRIAL COUNSEL SMITH'S WANTON MISMANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION COVERED BY THE ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE (ACP).

Supporting Facts:

(1) Until March of 1997 I was ignorant of the nature, governing rules, and scope of the ACP.

(2) Throughout the period of our relationship I wholly relied on Trial Attorney Smith to advise me concerning my rights under the law.

(3) Smith never explained to me the ACP.

(4) Smith never received advanced authorization from me to disclose information covered by the ACP.

(5) Smith never advised me as to the probable consequences of any of the breaches of my ACP caused by his statements to the police and his questions to witnesses during the proceedings.

(6) On January 12, 1993 Smith disclosed to the police ACP information concerning the location of the victim's body, leading the police to discover it and to arrest me.

(7) Smith elicited from witnesses at the preliminary hearing and at trial the contents of the ACP conference held on the morning of January 12, 1993 at Smith's office. As a result of these questions the jury was given to understand

that I lied to Smith about the circumstances of the victim's death at this ACP conference.

(8) While I was testifying during trial, Smith asked me to tell the jury *when* and *why* I had first come forward with the explanation of my wife's death that I gave at trial. These questions called for information within the ACP as I had first related such information to my attorney during an ACP conference.

(9) Smith failed to assert my ACP for statements attributed to me by Jerry and Kathy Hamilton during the dinner meeting I had with them on January 11, 1993. Said meeting was privileged under California Evidence Code §952 as they were "reasonably necessary for the transmission or the accomplishment of the purpose" for which Smith had been consulted. Smith was aware of the circumstances which justified a claim of privilege for the contents of the January 11, 1993 dinner meeting.

(10) Had I been advised by Smith that I had the power and standing through the ACP to prevent the disclosure of the facts described in (6) to (9) above, I would have refused to authorize Smith to make or solicit any of these disclosures.

GROUND 2: ATTORNEY SMITH'S UNPROFESSIONAL HANDLING OF ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGED (ACP) INFORMATION FRUSTRATED THE FORMATION OF A MEANINGFUL ATTORNEY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP BY CAUSING PETITIONER TO BE LESS THAN CANDID WITH HIM IN SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS. THIS VIOLATED PETITIONER'S SIXTH AND FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT RIGHTS TO EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE OF COUNSEL AS CRUCIAL INFORMATION RELATED TO GUILT, INNOCENCE, AND PUNISHMENT WAS WITHHELD FROM SMITH AND ULTIMATELY THE JURY.

Supporting Facts:

(1) Based on the way in which the contents of the ACP January 12, 1993 morning meeting were disclosed to Smith, to the police on January 12, 1993, and later in open court (at the preliminary hearing), I concluded that statements made by me to Smith could be used against me. I assumed that what Smith had done with respect to the January 12, 1993 ACP information was somehow required by law.

(2) When Smith questioned me during trial about whether I had lied to him and why, I was startled by his tactics but assumed that the only course open to me was to answer his questions.

(3) When Smith was finally ready to hear from me, I intentionally refrained from disclosing to him information concerning financial crimes which I had committed before my wife's death which bore on my state of mind and actions before, and after, her death. Concern that these crimes would be discovered by the police if I became the focus of their investigation was uppermost in my mind when I chose not to summon them and during the period

in which I misled others as to her fate. I choose not to disclose more than this here because of my Fifth Amendment privilege and because I do not have at this time the benefit of an attorney to discuss such disclosures with.

(4) As a result of Smith's conduct at the preliminary hearing and on January 12, 1993 with respect to what I know now to be privileged matters, I was loathe to discuss with him the real cause and circumstances of Susan's death. Smith never prompted me to discuss this subject prior to the point – four to six weeks before trial – when he suggested that the "suicide" explanation was contradicted by the evidence the police had developed.

(5) At no time during our relationship did Smith ever seek from me a waiver of my ACP or discuss with me the pros and cons of disclosing privileged matters.

GROUND 3: ATTORNEY SMITH'S HANDLING OF PETITIONER'S PRIVILEGE CONSTITUTED MALPRACTICE AND GAVE RISE TO A CONFLICT OF INTEREST WHICH VIOLATED PETITIONER'S SIXTH AND FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT RIGHTS TO EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE OF COUNSEL.

Supporting Facts:

(1) Smith was privately retained by me.

(2) At the time of the preliminary hearing Smith had only been paid one-seventh of the $70,000 I ultimately paid him to represent me.

(3) California's Business & Professions Code §6068(e) imposed on Smith a duty to "maintain inviolate" attorney-client privileged (ACP) communications.

(4) Smith knew or should have known that he had repeatedly mismanaged ACP information. Knowing this, he had an incentive to keep me in the dark about the nature of the ACP lest I disclose his malpractice, withhold further payment, and sue him.

(5) Had I been properly advised concerning the ACP by Smith that I had the power and standing through the ACP to prevent disclosure of the facts described, *ante*, in Ground 1, facts (6) through (9), I would have refused to authorize Smith to make or solicit any of these disclosures.

GROUND 4: ATTORNEY SMITH'S STANDING AS AN ADVOCATE FOR PETITIONER WAS COMPROMISED BY HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE AGENCIES PROSECUTING PETITIONER AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SMITH WAS BEHOLDEN TO THEM. THIS VIOLATED PETITIONER'S RIGHTS TO EFFECTIVE AND CONFLICT-FREE COUNSEL UNDER THE SIXTH AND FOURTEENTH AMENDMENTS.

Supporting Facts:

(1) At the time of my trial, Smith was being considered by the Fresno District Attorney's Office for employment as a teacher for new deputy district attorneys. Smith was aware of this and was discussing terms and conditions with them.

(2) Smith was *the* Fresno District Attorney between 1973 and 1978. He had also been a Clovis police officer and sheriff's deputy in Fresno County.

(3) Smith had known Prosecutor Kams as a friend and mentor, for 12 years. He had known Detective Schiotis professionally for over 20 years.

(4) Smith was an alcoholic at the time of my trial.

(5) Smith had a habit of drinking and driving which had resulted in his arrest on DUI charges on several occasions before and after my trial.

(6) Smith had been treated preferentially by his former associates at the Fresno District Attorney's Office and police in relation to these drunk driving incidents.

(7) Smith was aware that he had been treated preferentially. He never did a single day in jail for any of his DUI's until a rapid series of them occurred and caused him to serve limited county jail time beginning in the Fall of 1997.

(8) Smith's relationship to Fresno law enforcement, the possibility of future employment as a teacher of deputy district attorneys, and his desire to maintain and extend his tacit DUI immunity, caused him to emphasize his self-interests over my interests in several areas, including:

(a) The disclosure to Detective Schiotis on January 12, 1993 of the location of my wife's body;

(b) Smith's efforts to prove during the trial that he had been the good samaritan that tipped the police on the location of the body; and,

(c) Smith's questions of me at trial concerning attorney-client privileged conferences were clearly designed to clear him of suspicion of having had an unethical role in the "creation" of my trial testimony. These questions elicited facts which compromised my credibility.

(9) At the time of trial, I was unaware of the "facts" described in (1), (2) and (4) through (8) above.

GROUND 5: ATTORNEY SMITH WAS INEFFECTIVE FOR FAILING TO PRESENT OBVIOUS, READILY AVAILABLE, EVIDENCE NEGATING THE PEOPLE'S MOTIVE THEORY. THIS VIOLATED PETITIONER'S SIXTH AND FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT RIGHTS TO EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE OF COUNSEL.

Supporting Facts:

(1) According to the Fifth Appellate District, California Court of Appeal, the People's motive theory was:

> "The evidence of motive was extremely strong. Defendant was addicted to drugs, and Susan had removed him from the business checking account, depriving him of this source of money. Defendant was angry about this. Susan had discovered defendant's fourth step notes. This discovery could have led to divorce, loss of the business, separation from his son, and the exposure of defendant's past to the community." (Slip opinion on appeal [5 Crim. F020453] at p. 13.)

(2) In reality, I was at the time of my wife's death, a millionaire whose separate property was 20 times the size of the community property I jointly possessed with my wife.

(3) I gave Smith my CPA's name (Carl Campbell) and told Mr. Campbell to be forthcoming with Smith.

(4) Smith interviewed Mr. Campbell and called him as a witness on a matter unrelated to my financial condition.

(5) Mr. Campbell would have verified fact (2), above.

(6) The "sordid" aspects of my past (my felony convictions and past addiction to drugs and alcohol) were known to most everyone my wife and I knew socially.

(7) I told my attorney that nearly everyone in my church, and that I knew socially, knew about my criminal record and my difficulties with drugs and alcohol. Trial witnesses Sherry Bennett, Carl Campbell, David Eisenbise, Jerry Hamilton, Judy Ingoldsby, Larry Ingoldsby, Barbara Marsh, George Marsh, Katherine Stewart, and others, if asked, would have corroborated this as fact.

(8) If Smith had asked trial witnesses Carl Campbell or Jerry Hamilton (or me) about the circumstances under which I was removed from the business checking account, he would have learned (and thus would have been able to prove) that I was *not forced* off the account. They would have testified that I had control of the company and that I voluntarily agreed to be removed to appease my wife.

GROUND 6: ATTORNEY SMITH VIOLATED PETITIONER'S SIXTH AMENDMENT RIGHT TO EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE OF COUNSEL BY FAILING TO PRESENT ENTRIES FROM SUSAN'S "DIARY" DEMONSTRATING THAT AN AVALANCHE OF ANGER WAS PENT-UP INSIDE HER – WANTING TO BE LOOSED ON PETITIONER IF HE PROVED TO BE UNFAITHFUL.

Supporting Facts:

(1) Susan Kurtz was in a program called "AlAnon" which is designed to assist a loved one who is drug or alcohol dependent.

(2) As part of Susan's participation in AlAnon, she was working through the famous "12-Step" program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

(3) Susan's written assignments related to steps 1 to 3 and were provided in discovery to Smith by the Fresno District Attorney.

(4) The weight of the trial evidence was that Susan had a mild and "long-suffering" disposition.

(5) I testified that Susan flew into a rage *after* learning of my marital infidelities on January 3, 1993 and attacked me. After trial I learned (in April 1997) from her step-work that she was, in fact, unaware of any infidelities, just as I had testified.

(6) An "AIDS test receipt" – unknown to the defense and prosecution – in Susan's wallet (People's exhibit #25) made it seem to the jury that my testimony that Susan was unaware of my infidelities was a lie.

(7) Susan's step-work includes direct statements by her of pent-up anger, "rage," and suspicion concerning the possibility that I had been unfaithful to her. Anyone reading her step-work would see she was a powder keg primed to explode at any proof of infidelity on my part.

(8) Susan states that she took the AIDS test out of fear of my intravenous drug use might have exposed me to AIDS.

(9) Smith never showed me Susan's step-work. I had no knowledge of its contents until I obtained his file in April of 1997.

(10) Smith made no attempt to put Susan's step-work into evidence.

GROUND 7:[1] PETITIONER'S RIGHTS UNDER THE SIXTH AND FOURTEENTH AMENDMENTS TO EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE OF COUNSEL AND RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS (FIFTH AMENDMENT) WERE VIOLATED WHEN TRIAL COUNSEL SMITH NEGLECTED TO SEARCH A WALLET CONTAINING INADMISSIBLE HEARSAY EVIDENCE LATER FOUND BY THE JURY.

Supporting Facts:

(1) People's exhibit #25 was Susan Kurtz's wallet.

(2) Among the 55 items in the wallet was a receipt for an HIV blood test.

(3) Smith admitted in the Notice of Appeal authorized by him that he was ineffective for failing to search this wallet.

(4) Smith was unaware of the HIV blood test receipt in the wallet. It was not mentioned in the trial record.

(5) I was unaware of the receipt.

(6) The receipt was found and discussed by my jury.

(7) At least one juror, and perhaps more, considered the receipt as strong evidence that I had lied on the stand. Six jurors have recalled seeing the receipt

[1] Ground 7 as presented here was previously submitted as one of four grounds, namely Ground 1, in petitioner's original habeas petition filed with the Court on December 12, 1997. This ground's contention and supporting facts remain unchanged.

(8) I had testified that my wife was *unaware* of my infidelities prior to her discovery of my Alcoholics Anonymous "4th-step" report on January 3, 1993.

(9) Evidence could have been produced by trial counsel to prove that my wife had taken the blood test out of concern arising from my admitted intravenous drug use and *not* because she thought I had been unfaithful.

(10) A reasonable person acting as a juror would conclude I lied as to fact (8) above after having seen the HIV receipt in my wife's knowledge as they would, erroneously surmise, that knowledge of my infidelities led her to get the blood test.

GROUND 8:[2] PETITIONER'S SIXTH AND FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT RIGHTS TO EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE OF COUNSEL WERE VIOLATED BY ATTORNEY SMITH'S FAILURE TO REQUEST CALJIC 8.73 [RELATING EVIDENCE OF PROVOCATION TO THE DEGREE OF MURDER.]

Supporting Facts:

(1) CALJIC No. 8.73 (1992 rev.) reads:

> "When the evidence shows the existence of provocation that played a part in inducing the unlawful killing of a human being, but also shows that such provocation was not such as to reduce the homicide to manslaughter, and you

[2] Ground 8 as presented here was previously submitted as one of four grounds, namely Ground 2, in petitioner's original habeas petition. This ground's contention and supporting facts remain unchanged.

find that the killing was murder, you may consider the evidence of provocation for such bearing as it may have on the question of whether the murder was of the first or second degree."

(2) CALJIC No. 8.73 was not given to the jury.

(3) My testimony and defense to the first degree murder allegation relied upon a theory of violent provocation of me by my wife. To wit: that my wife had assaulted me and that the physical acts I took were motivated by a desire to contain her rage and minimize injury to me.

(4) There was testimonial and photographic evidence establishing that my wife bit and kicked me.

(5) Provocation was a pivotal issue in the case and the sine qua non of the defense.

GROUND 9:[3] THE TRIAL COURT COMMITTED PREJUDICIAL ERROR AND DENIED PETITIONER HIS FIFTH AMENDMENT RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS AND HIS CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO A JURY TRIAL IN FAILING TO INSTRUCT THE JURY IT COULD CONSIDER PROVOCATION IN DETERMINING THE DEGREE OF MURDER.

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[3] Ground 9 as presented here was previously submitted as one of four grounds, namely Ground 3, in petitioner's original habeas petition. This ground's contention and supporting facts remain unchanged. Moreover, it was also amended into petitioner's previous habeas petition before the California Supreme Court ([#S078010] denied on July 28, 1999) in order to alleviate any prior concerns regarding its exhaustion.

Supporting Facts:

(1) The California Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District, held that, on the facts of my case, the trial court had a sua sponte duty to give CALJIC No. 8.73 [relating provocation to the degree of murder.] (See slip opinion, pp. 14-27, appendix A.)

(2) CALJIC No. 8.73 was not given to the jury.

(3) My testimony and defense to the first degree murder allegation relied upon a theory of violent provocation of me by my wife. To wit: that my wife had assaulted me and that the physical acts I took were motivated by a desire to contain her rage and minimize injury to me.

(4) There was testimonial and photographic evidence establishing that my wife bit and kicked me.

(5) Provocation was a pivotal issue in the case and the sine qua non of the defense.

GROUND 10:[4] INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE VIOLATED PETITIONER'S RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS UNDER THE FIFTH AND FOURTEENTH AMENDMENTS BECAUSE EVIDENCE WAS NOT SUFFICIENT BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT TO SUPPORT HIS FIRST DEGREE MURDER CONVICTION.

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[4] Ground 10 as presented here was previously submitted as one of four grounds, namely Ground 4, in petitioner's original habeas petition. This ground's contention and supporting facts remain unchanged.

Supporting Facts:

(1) The trial record, and the statements of witnesses and exhibits therein, are insufficient to prove as a matter of law premeditation or malice aforethought beyond a reasonable doubt.

VERIFICATION

I, Robert M. Kurtz, state:

I am the Petitioner in this action. I have read the foregoing "Petitioner's Second, Amended Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus" and the facts stated therein are true to the best of my own knowledge, except as to matters that are therein stated on my own information and belief, and as to those matters I believe them to be true.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct and that this declaration was executed at Corcoran, California on August 3, 1999.

/s/ Robert M. Kurtz
Robert M. Kurtz,
Petitioner,
In Propria Persona

APPENDIX M

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

ROBERT M. KURTZ DECLARATION

I, Robert M. Kurtz, declare as follows:

1. On the morning of January 11, 1993 I paid Attorney William A. Smith $1,000 as a retainer to represent me in connection with the police investigation of the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of my wife, Susan Kurtz.

2. Due to the physical, mental, and emotional state I was in, I was unable to bring myself to disclose to Mr. Smith anything beyond the fact that the police wanted to polygraph me and that my wife had disappeared. On the same level I realized that if Mr. Smith was to be able to be of help to me, he would have to know what I knew. I called back that afternoon, and we agreed to meet again at 8 a.m. on January 12, 1993.

3. During the evening of January 11, 1993 I met with my mother, Katharine Hamilton, and her husband, Jerry Hamilton. I felt like I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. I went to them in the hope that one or both of them would consent to accompany me to Mr. Smith's office the next morning. Jerry had formally counseled my wife and me, and I respected his objectivity, maturity, and wisdom. I hoped that, of the two, he would be the one to go with me but was not sure that he would agree to do so. If he did not, I hoped my mother would go with me. I no longer trusted my judgment. I had contemplated suicide

more than once in the preceding week. At times I wondered whether I was losing my mind. I did not see how I could hold myself together to make the necessary disclosures to Mr. Smith without the steadying influence of one or both of them. In addition, I wanted to have Mr. Smith advise Jerry and me concerning arrangements to handle my business and personal affairs should I be arrested. I anticipated turning some or all of these matters over to Jerry. I expected what I said to them to be confidential.

4. Early on the morning of January 12, 1993, Jerry Hamilton and I drove to my home at 2062 E. Fallbrook Avenue in Fresno. The plan was to allow me to shower and change my clothes before we went to Mr. Smith's office. We met an officer who was stationed at the house. He said that a warrant to search my house had been obtained. Also, he said that the other officers had left but were to return with someone who would be able to help them access the computers in my home. I was allowed to go into the house and retrieve some clothes. I was not detained.

5. Jerry and I arrived a little early at Mr. Smith's office. We told him about the police officer stationed at the house and what this officer had said about a warrant. We told Mr. Smith that the police officer had said that the search team had arrived at 2 a.m. and left before we arrived, leaving only one officer pending their return to look at computer files.

6. A few minutes into this discussion, Mr. Smith called my home. I heard him ask the party he reached if they had found anything. When Mr. Smith hung up the telephone he told Jerry and me that they had not found anything. About 10 minutes later Mr. Smith called my home again. This time I heard him tell the party he had

reached to look in "the back bedroom closet," "the computer room closet" or words to that in effect.

7. I have read Jerry Hamilton's declaration attached as exhibit 2 to this petition. I do not recall being asked by Mr. Smith for my opinion as to whether he should tell the police the location of Susan's body, and I do not recall him asking me to authorize him to do so. I only recall that he did tell them to look in the location described above.

8. At no time during this meeting, or thereafter, did Mr. Smith advise me concerning the scope or nature of the attorney-client privilege. At no time did I hear him tell Jerry Hamilton that the communications made during this meeting between the three of us, or those originating from either Mr. Smith or myself, were subject to the attorney-client privilege. At no time during this meeting did Mr. Smith discuss with me the pros and cons of disclosing to the police the location of Susan's body or the legal consequences to me of them finding her body.

9. At no time during this meeting did Mr. Smith inform me that I had a privilege to prevent Jerry from disclosing the contents of our discussion of that meeting. At no time during this meeting did Mr. Smith inquire as to the reason for Jerry's presence. I did not tell him what my reasons were for having Jerry there. Mr. Smith just began to ask me questions in Jerry's presence

10 Prior to making this disclosure to the police, Mr. Smith did not interview me concerning statements I had made to the police and other people concerning my wife's whereabouts or as to statements I had made as to what I did or did not know of her fate.

11. During my preliminary hearing of February 16, 1993, I saw that Jerry Hamilton had been allowed, without objection from my attorney, to describe his recollections of what I had told Mr. Smith on the morning of January 12, 1993.

12. At no point between the second phone call of January 12, 1993 and my preliminary hearing did Mr. Smith ask me to tell him what the circumstances of my wife's death had been.

13. As a result of my experience observing my attorney's conduct with respect to the disclosure of the location of Susan's body and the disclosure to the police, and later at the preliminary hearing of Jerry's recollection of statements I had allegedly made during the attorney-client conference of the morning of January 12, 1993, I concluded that statements I made to Mr. Smith could in fact be used against me. This thought first crossed my mind on the day of my arrest. It ripened into a conviction during the preliminary hearing as I saw that Jerry Hamilton was allowed to relate, under Smith's questioning, his understanding of the substance of my January 12, 1993 conference with Mr. Smith. As I thought about it in the coming weeks and months, I was disturbed by Smith's immediate disclosure of the location of Susan's body but presumed that his conduct was lawful – possibly having something to do with 'obstruction of justice' laws. Everyone I spoke to about Mr. Smith, both prior to and subsequent to January 12, 1993 (excepting the postconviction period), told me that Smith was the finest criminal defense attorney in Fresno.

14. Prior to my arrest, I was not aware of the "attorney-client privilege" per se. I had been told things that

were told to one's attorney were supposed to be held in confidence. I did not know at any time prior to March 26, 1997 that I was the holder of the privilege, or that I had the standing to object at any time I felt my privilege was being invaded. I did not realize that the failure to so object might be construed as a waiver of the privilege. Also, I believed that only my attorney was allowed to speak in court on my behalf regarding points of law. I had no understanding of the extent to which statements made in the presence of third parties could, in some instances, still be subject to a valid claim of the privilege. Mr. Smith never discussed the nature or scope of the attorney-client privilege with me. I relied upon him implicitly to advise me concerning the nature of any privilege that I possessed and assumed that the way he handled the disclosures of the location of the body and Jerry Hamilton's description of the substance of remarks attributed to Smith and myself, as somehow required by law. I assumed, based on his conduct, that I had no choice in these matters.

15. This remained my state of mind during trial. When Mr. Smith questioned me during trial about whether I had lied to him and why, and about how statements he made to me subsequent to my preliminary hearing and prior to trial affecting the explanation I offered at trial about Susan's death, I was startled by his tactics but assumed that the only course available to me was to answer his questions.

16. At no time during our relationship do I recall Mr. Smith ever seeking from me a waiver of my attorney-client privilege or discussing with me the pros and cons of disclosing privileged matters.

17. Mr. Smith did not ask me to describe what I knew about the circumstances of Susan's death at any time between January 12, 1993 and approximately one month before trial. In fact, during this period he steered me away from the subject on the occasions that I attempted to discuss it with him. On these occasions he told me that it was best to wait for all the facts from other sources to be in. He said that he preferred to deal with "the facts" and to work from there.

18. When Mr. Smith was finally ready to hear from me, I intentionally refrained from disclosing to him information concerning financial crimes which I had committed before Susan's death which bore on my state of mind and actions before, and after, her death. Concern that these crimes would be discovered by the police if I became the focus of their investigation was uppermost in my mind when I chose not to summon them and during the period in which I misled others as to her fate. I choose not to disclose more than this here because of my Fifth Amendment privilege, and because I do not have at this time the benefit of an attorney to discuss such disclosures with.

19. There were other material facts relating to my conduct and that of other people which I did not discuss with Mr. Smith because of what I had observed about how Smith had handled other information I had given him. (See, *ante*, at ¶ 13.) I will not disclose the nature of that information here because of my Fifth Amendment privilege, and because I do not have the benefit of an attorney at this time to discuss the implications of such a disclosure.

20. I may be willing to disclose such information after a judge rules upon the extent to which such information (if divulged by me) can be used substantively or – if after it was disclosed – could such information only be used for impeachment.

21. August 30, 1995 was the day that the California Supreme Court denied review of my appeal. (See appendix B.) March 26, 1997 was the day upon which I learned of the basis for the claims in this petition.

22. On February 26, 1997 I filed a habeas petition in Fresno County Superior Court which advanced three separate claims of error. These claims were:

> Claim I: "Inadmissible hearsay evidence inadvertently came before the jury during deliberations and rendered petitioner's trial fundamentally unfair . . . " [This claim concerned a document which, unbeknownst to the parties, was secreted in my wife's wallet and which received considerable attention by the jury when they discovered it during deliberations.]
>
> Claim II: "Petitioner's Sixth Amendment right to effective assistance of counsel was violated when trial counsel neglected to search a wallet containing inadmissible hearsay evidence later found by the jury."
>
> Claim III: "Evidence presented with this petition demonstrates that petitioner's Sixth Amendment right to counsel was violated when counsel negligently failed to request CALJIC No. 8.73 . . . " (See habeas petition No. 583955-0 filed February 26, 1997 in Fresno County Superior Court.)

Thus, there is no overlap between the claims in this petition and the claims raised in my earlier petition.

23. I did not write this April 1997 habeas petition, and I did not write the February 26, 1997 habeas petition. Both petitions were written by another inmate, Joseph Hunt, D61863.

24. Although I attempted, beginning in late 1995, to educate myself as to the fundamentals of postconviction procedure, I remain wholly in the dark about the rules of evidence. I possess only fragmentary information about what constitutes reversible error. I have no formal legal training.

25. I learned of the basis for the three claims made in my February 26, 1997 petition as a result of conversations with Trial Attorney William Smith and others. I did not have the legal perspicacity to spot these issues on my own.

26. On March 26, 1997 I had a discussion with the inmate who wrote this petition. At my behest, during the preceding week, he had read my trial record. I had wanted him to do so on an earlier occasion, but he had been unable to spare the time to do so. Up until sometime in early March, he had been working on his own legal matters and had only been able to spare enough time to draft a petition based upon the three claims I was then aware of. (See these claims, *ante,* at 22.) I was anxious to file these claims as soon as possible because he had explained to me the one year limitation period adopted by Congress in the "antiterrorist" bill and signed into law on April 24, 1996. (See 28 U.S.C. 2244(d).)

27. Prior to meeting this individual, I had not been comfortable sharing the facts of my case with any other inmate. There were two reasons for this: first, the nature of my case, and second, no one else on this yard seemed qualified to assist me.

28. After the California Supreme Court denied review of my appeal on August 30, 1995, I realized that I would need expert help if I was ever to file a habeas petition concerning the three claims that I was aware of – or any other claims that might be later identified. To that end, my family hired Katherine L. Hart, a Fresno attorney, to provide legal services to me in connection with the preparation of a criminal habeas petition.

29. On more than one occasion that I am aware of, Ms. Hart was offered a copy of my trial record. She stated that she did not need to see it. Prior to January of 1997 I often sought guidance from Ms. Hart concerning what work she needed to do in order to assist me in developing as effective of a petition as possible. In September of 1996 I asked her if she would be willing to write it for me. She did not respond to that letter. I was looking for direction from her as to how best to proceed so that a strong and thorough petition could be filed. I asked Ms. Hart about what deadlines I was facing. After I heard of the "anti-terrorist" bill, I asked her by letter for advice concerning it. As the letters between us will confirm, Ms. Hart never responded to these inquiries. The only substantial work performed by Ms. Hart on my behalf was to assist the investigator in drafting of declarations that were to be presented to jurors regarding one of the claims in the February 26, 1997 petition and to proofread an early draft of that petition. This draft was abandoned by me in favor

of a version (redone from the ground up) prepared by the inmate mentioned above.

30. Had I not received help from this inmate, I would have been unable to comply with 28 U.S.C. 2244(d). I note that Ms. Hart never did respond to my written request for information and advice concerning that legislation. By January of 1997, I concluded that Ms. Hart basically intended to limit herself to work related to a superficial critiquing of my own draft of claims already identified. I had asked on more than one occasion for her to visit me to discuss matters that I did not feel comfortable discussing by letter or telephone. She never responded to these inquiries through visiting procedures.

31. I have attempted to be painstakingly attentive to the pursuit of postconviction remedies. From November 1993 through January 1997, I have written over 190 letters concerning my case, the investigation, and presentation of facts relevant to a collateral attack on my conviction. The chronological record of legal correspondence and communications attached to this declaration accurately chronicles those efforts. I have a typed copy of each of them in my possession. I have received in excess of 80 written responses to these letters from the attorneys, investigators, and others assisting me in the preparation of issues collateral to my appeal. My appellate counsel recommended on June 26, 1995 that I hire an investigator to verify facts not in the trial record but within the scope of a petition for writ of habeas corpus. On July 27, 1995 my family retained an investigator. Over $4,000 has been paid to him to date.

32. I have been a maintenance painter throughout the past three years. My assignment's job description calls for 40 hours of work per week.

33. Neither appellate counsel, Cliff Gardner, or habeas counsel, Katherine Hart, mentioned to me the existence of a legal basis to pursue any of the claims made in the petition to which this declaration is attached.

34. Ms. Hart has never asked for money beyond her $1,000 retainer.

35. Prior to my meeting with Mr. Smith on January 12, 1993, I had never disclosed the location of my wife's body.

36. During 1993, Mr. Smith told me that Prosecutor Kams was a close friend of his. Smith said he had been Kams's mentor, and that Kams had lived for a time directly below him in a duplex or apartment building.

37. Mr. Smith told me prior to trial that, in his opinion, I was certain to be convicted of first degree murder if I did not testify. Although I had no fondness for the prospect of testifying, the admonition tipped me in favor of doing so.

38. Mr. Smith was privately retained. I paid him over $70,000 in installments of roughly $10,000. About $10,000 had been paid Mr. Smith at the time of the preliminary hearing in February 1993.

39. As my sole and separate property, I held at the time of my wife's death about $1 million in debt and equity securities. My attorney never questioned me about my financial condition even though I was paying him myself. I would have disclosed to him the relevant facts if he had

asked. I gave Mr. Smith Carl Campbell's name. Mr. Campbell was our personal and corporate accountant, and I asked Carl to be forthcoming with him.

40. In 1988 or 1989, I stood up in front of the congregation (which totaled about 500 people) of the Millbrook Presbyterian Church and confessed to them that I had been to jail and openly described how that experience effected my life. I told my attorney that everyone in our church knew about my criminal record. Also, I told him that it was widely known in the church that I had had difficulties with alcohol and drugs, and that I was in Alcoholics Anonymous as a result. Carl Campbell was a member of the church, and he knew of these things as well. The pastor of our church at that time was Dale Paulsen, and he could corroborate these facts. In addition, trial witnesses Sherry Bennett, David Eisenbise, Jerry Hamilton, Judy Ingoldsby, Larry Ingoldsby, Barbara Marsh, George Marsh, and Catherine Stewart all could have been present when I disclosed my criminal history to the congregation.

41. As a result of Mr. Smith's conduct at the preliminary hearing and on January 12, 1993 with respect to what I know now to be privileged matters, I was loathe to discuss with him the real cause and circumstances of Susan's death. Smith never prompted me to discuss this subject prior to the point – four to six weeks before trial – when he suggested that the "suicide" explanation was contradicted by the evidence the police had developed. (See my testimony at RT 779, 786, 843-844.)

42. In August of 1992, I consented to my wife's request that I withdraw as a signator on the business (MacSource) checking account. I understood her concern

that I might relapse into the use of drugs and use business funds. Susan was quite firm about wanting me to do this, and after some argument on the subject, I agreed in the interest of marital harmony and to demonstrate my good faith. I was not pleased with the step – because it meant I was not being taken at my word as to my resolve to stay drug free. My wife needed my consent to this step because I owned half of MacSource's stock, was its largest creditor, and because I was CEO, Chairman of the Board, and President of the company. She had no legal authority to compel me to concede my signature power. Quite the opposite, I was in a position to remove her from the account if I so wished. Jerry Hamilton, Reed Harris and Carl Campbell were all aware of the fact that I consented to being removed from the account.

43. In 1997 it was suggested to me by the person who wrote this petition that I secure a copy of my trial attorney's file. I arranged to do so through my mother (Katharine Hamilton) and William DiVita, a licensed California Investigator. Prior to 1997, I had no idea that my attorney's file was my property and that he would release it to me upon request.

44. On Wednesday, April 16, 1997, I received a package which contained a large accordion file folder filled with police reports, transcripts, and other papers related to my case. I recognized Mr. Smith's handwriting on at least 100 sheets of paper in the file. There were a variety of bills, time sheets, and memoranda on subjects related to my case.

45. I located three different copies of Susan Kurtz's "Step-work" in Mr. Smith's file. One copy was attached as an exhibit to a Fresno Police Department report dated

July 30, 1993 (Report #93-2051) which was submitted by an officer F. Clark (badge #228.) There were two more copies of her "Step-work" in a file marked "4th Step – Reed Harris" which was in the accordion file. Attached to this petition as exhibit 10 is a true copy of a document found by me in this file.

46. I told my attorney that "Iris" was my wife's sponsor/counselor at AlAnon. Mr. Smith said that he would interview her.

47. Prior to receiving this file, I had never read my wife's AlAnon step-work. In 1992 I learned that my wife was preparing her step-work, Steps One to Three, on our home computer. She told me not to look at her file, and I honored her request. However, the contents of exhibit 10 is such that it could only have been written by my wife about our relationship. The circumstances described in it correspond to incidents and statements made over the course of our relationship.

48. Attorney Smith asked me to give him examples of occasions when my wife had reacted in anger. One of the examples I gave him concerned Barbara Marsh (insulin story.) Mr. Smith unsuccessfully cross-examined Mr. Marsh about this incident at RT 322-323.

49. In March of 1997 I received a copy of several articles that had appeared in The Fresno Bee. I do not subscribe to this newspaper nor does the prison library carry it. (True copies of these four articles are attached as exhibit 7 to this petition.) Most of the facts contained in the article of January 21, 1997 were matters of first impression for me. A few people had intimated to me that Mr. Smith had a drinking problem. However, this information came to me after my conviction. I had no inkling that

Mr. Smith had been cited on several occasions prior to my trial for driving under the influence.

50. Mr. Smith told me in 1993 that he had been a police officer and a prosecutor early in his career. He did not disclose to me at any point during 1993 that he had been offered a position with the Fresno County District Attorney's Office. I had no idea in 1993 that negotiations or discussions were taking place between Mr. Smith and representatives of the Fresno District Attorney's Office over hiring Mr. Smith to train prosecutors. I did not learn of these circumstances until I read the June 24, 1996 article that was sent to me by a relative of mine in March 1997.

51. I gave these articles to the person assisting me with this petition when I received them. I did not understand the legal significance of them until this individual explained the implications to me. At his behest, I arranged to have Mr. Smith interviewed on April 14th and 15th, 1997 by William DiVita, a licensed California Investigator. (See exhibit 6 attached to this petition.)

52. After Attorney Smith's representation concluded, I wrote to him requesting him to provide information, client files, agreements and recollections. I sent him four separate letters mailed as confidential legal mail on July 2, 1995, February 12, 1996, December 1, 1996, and January 10, 1997. Each letter requested him to provide specific information about what had occurred during my trial. In the February 12, 1996 and the January 10, 1997 letters I asked for information, my files, agreements, and a copy of police reports. I also asked him to assess his performance and strategic choices at trial. My letters to Mr. Smith did not elicit one response. Frustrated in not having a

response, I ask my investigator, Richard L. Barnes, to contact him. Two meetings occurred between them, however, the basic question I had posed to Mr. Smith concerning CALJIC No. 8.73 remained unanswered; to wit: had there been any tactical reason for not requesting the instruction? And Mr. Smith, though he promised to supply a declaration concerning his discovery of an HIV test receipt and the comments the jurors made to him concerning their own mid-deliberation discovery of said receipt, to date no such declaration has been forwarded to me.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

April 28, 1997

/s/ Robert M. Kurtz
Robert M. Kurtz, Petitioner

ATTACHMENT TO
ROBERT M. KURTZ DECLARATION

CUMULATIVE RECORD OF LEGAL CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATIONS ESTABLISHING PETITIONER'S DILIGENCE IN PURSUIT OF CLAIMS RAISED IN HIS PETITION

Note: The chronological listing which follows is from records of legal correspondence and communications between petitioner and persons related to his case from November 1993 through January 1997. The notation "To" refers to correspondence petitioner initiated; the notation "From" indicates communications petitioner received. Letters sent to family and friends to coordinate items such as phone calls, ordering and payment for legal materials

or aids, and payment for legal and investigative services rendered are noted as "personal letter."

DATE	DESCRIPTION
11-01-93	From: CCAP
11-15-93	To: Personal request for case law
11-18-93	To: Personal request for case law
11-18-93	To: Personal letter re: case
12-07-93	From: CCAP
12-09-93	To: CCAP
12-09-93	To: Personal attorney
12-09-93	To: Personal letter re: case
12-15-93	From: CCAP
01-03-94	From: Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District
01-06-94	To: CCAP
01-06-94	To: Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District
01-17-94	To: Personal letter re: case
01-18-94	From: CCAP
01-18-94	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
01-19-94	To: Attorney, C. Gardner
01-21-94	To: Personal attorney
02-04-94	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
02-25-94	To: Attorney, C. Gardner
03-03-94	To: Personal letter for case law
03-22-94	To: Personal attorney
03-28-94	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
03-31-94	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
04-08-94	To: Personal attorney
04-28-94	To: Attorney, C. Gardner
05-05-94	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
05-08-94	To: Personal request for case law
05-10-94	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
05-20-94	To: Attorney, C. Gardner
05-31-94	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
07-12-94	To: Attorney, C. Gardner
07-20-94	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
08-01-94	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
08-05-94	To: Attorney, C. Gardner

08-07-94 To: Personal letter re: case, copy of transcripts
08-10-94 To: Attorney, C. Gardner
08-23-94 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
08-23-94 To: Personal letter re: case, transcripts
08-23-94 To: Attorney, C. Gardner
08-31-94 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
09-01-94 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
09-06-94 To: Attorney, C. Gardner
09-08-94 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
09-13-94 To: Personal letter re: case
09-20-94 From: Attorney, C. Gardner re: transcripts
09-30-94 To: Attorney, C. Gardner
10-05-94 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
10-08-94 To: Attorney General, Supplemental Pro Se Open. Brief (OB)
10-08-94 To: Fresno County Superior Court, OB
10-08-94 To: CCAP, OB
10-08-94 To: Attorney, C. Gardner, OB
10-08-94 To: Attorney, W. Smith, OB
10-08-94 To: Fresno County District Attorney, OB
10-08-94 To: Personal letter re: case
10-11-94 To: Request legal aids
10-20-94 From: Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District
10-26-94 To: Personal letter re: case
10-26-94 To: Attorney, C. Gardner
10-27-94 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
10-30-94 To: Personal letter re: case
11-01-94 To: Attorney, C. Gardner
11-06-94 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
11-15-94 From: Attorney General
12-05-94 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
12-06-94 To: Attorney, C. Gardner
12-06-94 From: Attorney General
12-11-94 To: Attorney, C. Gardner
12-13-94 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
12-17-94 To: Attorney, C. Gardner
12-19-94 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
12-20-94 To: Attorney, C. Gardner

01-23-95	To: Personal request & update on case law
02-14-95	To: Request legal aids
04-15-95	To: Attorney, C. Gardner
04-15-95	To: Fresno County Superior Court
04-15-95	To: CCAP
04-16-95	To: Personal letter re: case
04-25-95	To: Personal attorney
05-07-95	To: Personal letter re: case
05-09-95	To: Personal box re:case & legal materials & case law
05-16-95	Oral arguments heard
05-16-95	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
05-21-95	To: Personal letter re: case
05-25-95	To: Attorney, C. Gardner
05-31-95	From: Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District, Opinion
06-02-95	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
06-05-95	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
06-11-95	To: Personal letter re: case
06-11-95	To: CCAP, request legal aids
06-18-95	To: Attorney, C. Gardner
06-19-95	To: Personal letter re: case & coordinate phone call
06-23-95	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
06-26-95	To: Personal letter re: case
06-26-95	To: Phone call to attorney, G. Gardner re: habeas petition; recommended hiring investigator to verify facts outside scope of appeal.
06-28-95	To: Attorney, C. Gardner
07-02-95	To: Attorney, W. Smith re: information & clarification (First letter sent, no response.)
07-02-95	To: Attorney, re: investigator
07-07-95	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
07-09-95	To: Personal letter re: case
07-12-95	From: Attorney re: investigator
07-14-95	To: Attorney, C. Gardner
07-16-95	To: Private attorney
07-16-95	To: Investigator, R. Barnes

07-19-95 From: Investigator, R. Barnes
07-26-95 To: Prison Litigation Coordinator
07-27-95 To: Investigator, R. Barnes, formal retainer
08-03-95 To: Personal letter to investigate facts
08-04-95 To: Personal letter re: case & retaining investigator
08-04-95 To: Prison staff re: investigator visit
08-06-95 To: State Bar of California, request legal aids
08-08-95 From: Investigator, R. Barnes
08-13-95 To: Attorney, C. Gardner
08-16-95 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
08-16-95 To: Investigator, R. Barnes (separate cover letter)
08-16-95 To: Attorney, C. Gardner
08-17-95 Meeting with investigator
08-17-95 To: Personal letter re: case & investigation
08-17-95 To: Investigator, general authorization
08-22-95 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
08-24-95 From: Facts related to investigation
08-30-95 From: California Supreme Court; review denied
09-11-95 To: Personal letter to investigate facts
09-11-95 To: Personal letter re: case
09-12-95 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
09-18-95 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
09-24-95 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
10-04-95 To: Attorney, C. Gardner
10-10-95 To: Request legal aids
10-10-95 To: Request legal aids
10-17-95 From: Attorney, C. Gardner
10-24-95 To: Request legal aids
10-26-95 To: Request legal aids
11-02-95 To: Request legal aids
11-09-95 Investigator met with trial counsel.
11-12-95 From: Investigator, R. Barnes re: case & invoice
11-24-95 To: Personal letter re: case
11-29-95 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
12-01-95 To: Attorney, K. Chavez
12-01-95 To: Attorney, L. Gibbs
12-03-95 To: Attorney, K. Hart
12-08-95 From: Attorney, K. Hart

12-13-95 To: Request legal aids
12-14-95 To: Personal letter re: investigation
12-17-95 To: Personal letter re: investigation
12-19-95 To: Personal letter re: investigation
12-27-95 From: Attorney, K. Chavez
12-29-95 To: Attorney, K. Hart
01-04-96 To: Request legal aids
01-05-96 From: Attorney, K. Hart
02-06-96 To: Personal letter to investigate facts
02-08-96 To: Personal letter re: case
02-08-96 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
02-09-96 To: Attorney, K. Hart
02-12-96 To: Attorney, W. Smith (Second letter sent, no response.)
02-14-96 From: Attorney, K. Hart
02-17-96 From: Investigator, R. Barnes re: interviews & invoice
02-22-96 To: Attorney, K. Hart re: formal retainer
02-22-96 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
02-23-96 To: Personal letter re: case & payments
02-25-96 To: Personal letter re: case & contract
03-07-96 From: Facts related to investigation
03-22-96 To: Personal letter to investigate facts
03-22-96 To: Personal letter re: case
03-22-96 To: Request legal aids
03-27-96 To: Legal materials sent out
03-28-96 From: Facts related to investigation
03-29-96 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
03-29-96 To: Attorney, K. Hart
04-05-96 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
04-07-96 To: Attorney, K. Hart
04-07-96 To: Personal letter re: case & brief mailings
04-10-96 To: Phone call to attorney, K. Hart
04-11-96 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
04-11-96 To: Request legal aids
04-11-96 To: Personal letter re: case
04-11-96 To: Attorney, K. Hart
04-11-96 From: Attorney, K. Hart

04-16-96 To: Request legal aids
04-28-96 To: Attorney, K. Hart
05-03-96 To: Request legal aids
05-04-96 From: Investigator, R. Barnes
05-06-96 From: Attorney, K. Hart
05-13-96 To: Personal letter re: investigation & facts
05-14-96 From: Investigator, R. Barnes
05-14-96 To: Personal letter re: case & declarations proposed
05-21-96 To: Attorney, K. Hart
05-21-96 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
05-28-96 From: Investigator, R. Barnes re: case & invoice
05-29-96 From: Attorney, K. Hart
05-31-96 To: Personal letter re: investigation of facts
05-31-96 To: Personal letter re: case & investigation
06-04-96 To: Attorney, K. Hart
06-04-96 To: Personal letter re: case
06-06-96 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
06-06-96 From: Facts related to investigation
06-16-96 To: Personal letter re: case & declarations
07-01-96 To: Personal letter re: investigation
07-01-96 To: Attorney, K. Hart
07-01-96 To: Personal letter re: investigation
07-05-96 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
07-07-96 To: Attorney, K. Hart
07-14-96 To: Attorney, K. Hart
07-14-96 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
07-16-96 To: Personal letter re: case & investigation
08-22-96 From: Facts related to investigation
08-26-96 To: Personal letter re: case
09-02-96 To: Request legal aids
09-10-96 To: Attorney, K. Hart
09-10-96 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
09-17-96 From: Legal aids received
09-22-96 To: Attorney, L. Curry
09-27-96 State of emergency prison lockdown; continued to 01-97
09-30-96 Investigator met with trial counsel second time.
10-07-96 From: Investigator, R. Barnes. Investigator

	met with trial counsel for second time on 09-30-96. Counsel did not sign declarations drafted by petitioner.
12-01-96	To: Personal letter re: case
12-01-96	To: Investigator, R. Barnes
12-01-96	To: Attorney, K. Hart
12-01-96	To: Attorney, W. Smith (Third letter sent, no response prior to deadline.)
12-03-96	To: Declaration mailed
12-03-96	To: Request legal aids
12-09-96	To: Request legal aids
12-09-96	To: Request legal aids
12-11-96	From: Legal aids received
12-12-96	To: Request legal aids
12-18-96	From: Legal aids received
12-18-96	To: Request legal aids
12-20-96	From: Facts related to investigation returned
12-23-96	To: Personal letter to investigate facts
12-23-96	To: Attorney, W. Gilg
12-24-96	From: Legal aids received
12-30-96	From: Legal aids received
01-01-97	To: Personal letter re: legal supplies
01-05-97	To: Law library re: case request
01-07-97	From: Attorney, W. Gilg
01-08-97	To: Personal call re: case
01-10-97	To: Attorney, W. Smith (Fourth letter sent, no response.)
01-10-97	To: Attorney, C. Gardner
01-12-97	To: Attorney, W. Gilg
01-13-97	To: Investigator, R. Barnes.
01-14-97	To: Request legal aids, re: books
01-14-97	From: Attorney, C. Gardner
01-20-97	To: Attorney, C. Gardner
01-20-97	From: Notification of legal supplies sent
01-20-97	To: Legal copies request
01-20-97	From: Legal addresses received
01-21-97	To: Letter requesting information/files
01-21-97	To: Attorney, W. Gilg

01-21-97 To: Personal letter re: case, payments
01-21-97 To: Legal phone conversation
01-21-97 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
01-21-97 From: Investigator, R. Barnes
01-22-97 To: Request legal aids
01-22-97 To: Request legal aids
01-23-97 To: Law library re: case request
01-23-97 To: Attorney, K. Hart
01-24-97 From: Law library re: cases
01-24-97 From: Attorney, W. Gilg
01-26-97 To: Law library re: case request
01-26-97 To: Investigator, R. Barnes
01-27-97 To: Request legal aids
01-27-97 From: Legal aids received
01-27-97 From: Law library re: cases
01-27-97 To: Law library re: case request
01-28-97 From: Law library re: cases
01-28-97 From: Received facts related to case
01-29-97 To: Law library re: forms request & copies
01-29-97 To: Personal letter re: case & payments
01-30-97 To: Attorney, W. Gilg
01-30-97 To: Investigator, W. DiVita
01-31-97 To: Law library re: case request
01-31-97 From: Law library re: legal copies
01-31-97 To: U.S. District Court
01-31-97 To: Attorney General
01-31-97 From: Investigator, R. Barnes re: investigation
01-31-97 From: Investigator, R. Barnes re: invoice & update
01-31-97 From: Attorney, K. Hart re: case law & requested info

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APPENDIX N

United States District Court
Eastern District of California

JERRY D. HAMILTON DECLARATION

I, Jerry D. Hamilton, declare as follows:

1. I have been Robert Michael Kurtz's stepfather since 1992.

2. On January 12, 1993, at Robert Michael Kurtz's request, I went with him to the law offices of William A. Smith at 1171 Fulton Mall, Suite 1100, in Fresno, California.

3. I was with Robert Michael Kurtz on this occasion because he had given me to understand, both by his statements and by his conduct to me, on January 11th and 12th, that he was having difficulty holding himself together so as to take the necessary steps to deal with his predicament. His mother and I felt he might, conceivably, attempt to commit suicide. It was evident to me that he was emotionally shattered by his recent experiences and was having extraordinary difficulty summoning up the strength and resolve necessary to do what was required by law and by reason given the circumstances surrounding Susan's death. It was my understanding that he felt my presence during his meeting with his attorney of January 12, 1993 was vital if he was to be able to face discussing with Mr. Smith his knowledge of the circumstances surrounding his wife's death. I had a relationship, both with Robert Michael Kurtz and his wife, Susan, in which they relied upon me, at times, for emotional support, counseling, and guidance from a Christian spiritual perspective.

4. On the morning of January 12, 1993, at around 8 a.m., Mr. Kurtz and I informed Mr. Smith that we had just come from Mr. Kurtz's house on 2062 E. Fallbrook Avenue in Fresno, where we had gone to pick up a change of clothes for Mr. Kurtz. We said that the Fresno police were there searching Mr. Kurtz's house pursuant to a warrant that they had obtained.

5. As a result of a verbal exchange between Mr. Kurtz and Mr. Smith, and I believe as a result of a specific inquiry made by Mr. Smith, Mr. Kurtz told Mr. Smith that his wife's body was in the closet of the computer room of Mr. Kurtz's house. This exchange took place during the client-attorney meeting which I attended on January 12, 1993.

6. Subsequent to this exchange, I observed Mr. Smith pick up his telephone to place a call. He asked Mr. Kurtz for his home telephone number. From words subsequently spoken by Mr. Smith into the receiver of the telephone and remarks that Mr. Smith made after he got off the telephone, I understood that Mr. Smith had spoken to a police officer who was over at Mr. Kurtz's house assisting in the search thereof. I heard Mr. Smith ask the party that he had reached, "Have you found anything?" After Mr. Smith hung up the telephone he told us that the police had not found anything.

7. Shortly after he placed this call, Mr. Smith picked up the telephone again. Both from the words of acknowledgment that Mr. Smith spoke into the receiver and Mr. Smith's remarks during this second telephone conversation and subsequent to it, I was given to understand that he had called Mr. Kurtz's house again. During Mr. Smith's second call to Mr. Kurtz's house, I heard Mr.

Smith again ask if they had found anything. Then Mr. Smith cupped a hand over the receiver, looked at Mr. Kurtz and me, and said "Should we tell them?" At this point, I indicated that I felt he should. Between the context and the words Mr. Smith spoke, I believed that Mr. Smith was referring to disclosing to the police the location of the body. I do not recall specifically what Mr. Kurtz said, or if he gestured in response to this question. I do not recall him objecting either. Without further discussion, Mr. Smith returned to his phone call. I heard him tell the party he had called the location of the body, just as Mr. Kurtz had described it to him moments before.

8. Mr. Smith did not tell either Mr. Kurtz or me that he intended to make this disclosure to the police before he made these telephone calls. I was continuously present with Mr. Kurtz and Mr. Smith during this meeting. Neither before or during the second phone call, did Mr. Smith discuss with Mr. Kurtz the legal consequences of disclosing to the police the location of the body or any possible pros and cons of such a disclosure. The impression I had from Mr. Smith's demeanor and actions during the phone call is that he believed it was best, and that it was in fact legally appropriate, to disclose this information to the police.

9. At no time before or after the telephone call did Mr. Smith so much as mention the attorney-client privilege. He did not advise Mr. Kurtz that this information need not be disclosed or that it could not be disclosed without Mr. Kurtz's consent. He did not tell Mr. Kurtz at anytime that the attorney-client privilege covered statements he had made that morning in Mr. Smith's presence which I too had been privy to.

10. Mr. Smith did not instruct me before, during, or at any time after this meeting that I was bound under the attorney-client privilege not to disclose, without permission from Mr. Kurtz – the holder of the privilege – the nature of the communications between Mr. Smith and Mr. Kurtz that I had witnessed. I was never told anything to this effect by Mr. Smith.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my recollection and belief.

Executed in Fresno, California the 14th day of April, 1997.

/s/ Jerry D. Hamilton
Jerry D. Hamilton